

THE JOURNAL

March 5, 2004

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Sports Cougar grappler advances to state championships [C1]

Arts Center director makes case for diversity in the arts [C12]


MARK DUFRÈNE/STAFF

EL CERRITO RESIDENT Royal Daystar walks along Central Avenue on March 1. Daystar plans to walk 15 miles on Saturday morning.

Spiritual, political ambitions take walk

El Cerrito candidate has set every street in

 By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

EL CERRITO — Ten-year resident Royal Daystar wanted to know his city better, perhaps paying attention to some of its needs, and challenge physically and spiritually. Starting Feb. 6, he began walking the city's 26 miles of streets, one by one, learning El Cerrito and recording findings in a journal. Today is to be the final day of the walk, as he walks the length of the city through its main streets, going up and down hills, and across the city from Avenue north and back. It's

a 15-mile trip he estimates will take about five hours.

"I'm a little scared about the long walk, but it's got to be done," said Daystar, who looks fit and strong at 39. "The walking effort won't feel completed if I don't do it."

Daystar sees himself as mayor of El Cerrito one day, perhaps soon, but said his current effort goes beyond mere political ambitions. It's a spiritual, social and physical undertaking, he said. It's part of his vision of a progressive, safe city with revenue to pay for its services and employees.

That vision would be harder to achieve if a controversial utility users' tax fails on the November ballot. Daystar's job with the city recreation department might be one of many positions and services threatened if the tax fails.

Daystar said he's walked each

of the city's 241 streets — he's counted them — over 10 days and plans to present what he's learned about the city to the El Cerrito City Council at an upcoming meeting.

Daystar said he originally thought of walking the city to raise money for a consultant who would then create a campaign for the utility tax, but dropped that idea because it was too complicated.

But he decided to walk anyway.

"It started as a political thing which I was trying to do, and it turned into a social/spiritual thing," Daystar said. "It's more than just generating revenue. It's sort of generating a circle of positive energy that could be put forward in the future."

Daystar said he hopes his walk can inspire people to vote for the tax, for the betterment of

the city.

City officials similarly worry about the fate of the tax — which the City Council placed on the ballot after some residents questioned its legality — and have said city services could be cut if it fails to win the 50 percent majority needed to pass.

Daystar said the city needs the tax to maintain city services and keep people employed, himself included.

"This is what living in the community is supposed to be about: working and spending taxes here," he said. "Without the utilities revenue, without that, they'll have to lay me off. I wanted all my life to work in my city, and now they can't hold me."

Daystar has been a counselor with the city's recreation department since June and said he

See WALK, Page A12

Proposal for plaza criticized

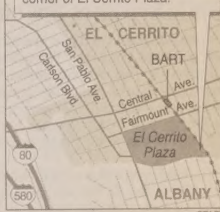
■ Developer proposes five-story apartment complex plus parking garage at shopping center's southeast corner

 By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

EL CERRITO — Plans for a sprawling housing and parking garage development on the southeast corner of El Cerrito Plaza were the subject of questions and criticism recently by residents fearful of what impacts the development will have on the adjacent area.

In an application submitted to the city last month by Forest Plaza Partners, LLC proposes an L-shaped development at the plaza, which would include a 99-unit condominium complex with a

A 99-unit condominium complex and an adjacent 405-space BART parking garage have been proposed for the southeast corner of El Cerrito Plaza.



STAFF

childcare facility and a 405-space parking garage slated for use by El Cerrito Plaza BART users, on a little more than 3 acres.

See PLAZA, Page A12

Measure J falls short, program cuts expected

■ But the passage of state Propositions 57 and 58 will help decrease the district's budget shortfall

 By Ana Facio Contreras
STAFF WRITER

West Contra Costa County school board president Charles Ramsey said although he is disappointed that Measure J failed, he did learn something from the experience.

"They don't have the confidence in the management or the willingness to pay and support the district in what we believe is

a serious need," he said.

Tuesday's ballot measure would have imposed an annual tax of 6.8 cents per square foot of residential and commercial building space in the West Contra Costa school district.

It fell just short of the 66.7 percent needed for approval. School board member Glen Price feared for the proposal from the first absentee results, which barely had 50 percent approval.

The tax was expected to raise \$7.5 million annually over five years to maintain school programs, such as small classes,

See SCHOOLS, Page A11

Former councilman reports phone threat

Norman LaForce says threat was made over tree stance

 By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

EL CERRITO — Former City Councilman Norman LaForce called police to report a threatening phone call the tree group or you will get hurt." The person then immediately hung up, he said.

"I do not lightly write this kind

chief, LaForce said he received the call shortly before 6 p.m. on Feb. 25, two days after he spoke at a packed El Cerrito City Council meeting in favor of a city ordinance that protects trees.

According to LaForce, he answered the phone, and before he could say anything, the male caller said: "Norman, you had better stop your involvement with the tree group or you will get hurt." The person then immediately hung up, he said.

"I do not lightly write this kind

of letter," LaForce wrote, "but the threat was such as to make me concerned that should something happen, I would want an independent record that a threat was made."

LaForce, who subsequently made an official police report about the call, said was used to receiving prank phone calls during his years as an El Cerrito council member, but he took the recent call much more seriously.

See THREAT, Page A11

Renewed Measure C has some local backing

 By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

EL CERRITO — At least three members of the City Council came out in favor of extending a countywide half-cent sales tax for an additional 20 years, citing benefits they say it would have for the city and county.

In 1988, Measure C was intended to raise \$1 billion for transit-related projects and programs until the year 2009, said Paul Maxwell, the chief deputy director of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, the county organization created to oversee the measure.

The authority is now gearing up to place the measure on the

ballot for a 20-year extension by voters this November, to raise an additional \$1.6 billion until 2029. Maxwell gave a presentation about Measure C to the council Monday night.

"We need a majority of cities representing a majority of the population to formally approve

See BACKING, Page A11

Rains bring business-as-usual to a standstill

 By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

ALBANY — Water seeped into at four San Pablo Avenue businesses during heavy rains one recent morning, causing hundreds of dollars in damage in one and inconveniencing others.

The businesses are located at or near the corner of Solano Avenue and include Max's Liquors, the Futon Shop, Dave's Dougout and Roger Dunn Printing.

Joey Mitchell, the owner of the Futon Shop, said he was at his store uncharacteristically early the morning of Wednesday, Feb. 25 — between 8 and 9 a.m. — and took action to prevent as much damage as he could when he saw the precipitation collecting near the top of the sidewalk. About an hour later, after city maintenance crews fixed the problem, things were back to



JOEY MITCHELL/CONTRIBUTED

THE INTERSECTION at Solano and San Pablo avenues resembled a lake after last week's rainstorm.

normal — though the floors of his and three others' shops — were drenched.

"Two hours later it was dried up and the people who came in here didn't know it happened..." said Mitchell, a Berkeley resident. "The sun was shining."

Next door to the Futon Shop, at Dave's Dougout, a baseball card and comic book store, the smell of wet carpet still hangs in

the air a week after the incident. The co-owner, Doug Sprague, didn't get to his business until 11 a.m. that day, with water sloshing beneath his feet as he walked inside.

He estimates a total of about \$500 to \$700 in damage occurred to boxes of inexpensive baseball cards, hundreds of cardboard

See FLOOD, Page A11

Community Folk

■ Forum will help people diagnose overlooked auto-immune disease. Page A3

At the Library

■ Have you read any good books lately? Want to let others know? Page A5



Martin Snapp

■ Family's history is marked by dedication and service to the East Bay. Page A3

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INSIDE

KNIGHTRIDER

INFORMATION FOR LIFE

NEWS BRIEFS

Albany

Student-produced Groove Fest tonight

The award-winning Albany High School Jazz Band will perform at the Albany High School Groove Fest, a student-produced musical extravaganza, tonight at 7 in the Albany High Albany High School Little Theater, 603 Key Route.

The AHS jazz band, which won top honors last year at the Santa Cruz Jazz Festival and from the California Music Educators' Association, will be joined in concert by Frank Martin, a world-renowned jazz keyboardist and mentor to Albany's budding high school musicians.

GrooveFest also is this year's first opportunity to hear Rhythm Bound, a wildly popular R&B group from Albany High. The concert is at 7 p.m. in the Albany High.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, and can be purchased at the door. All proceeds benefit the music program at Albany High.

Young backpackers' workshop scheduled

Learn what equipment is needed for a backpacking trip, and discover the fun places to hike. Venture Crew 2014 has scheduled a workshop on backpacking from 7:30-9 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17 at the Veterans Memorial Building, 1325 Portland Ave.

City joins recycled paper campaign

Albany and other Bay Area cities and counties are sponsoring a campaign this month asking workers and residents to make a special effort to use recycled paper at work and at home as a way to help the environment. The campaign encourages people to request paper that has at least 30 percent "post-consumer" recycled content — meaning that at least 30 percent of the paper is made from fibers that were salvaged from a previous paper product such as office and printing papers. Backers say using recycled paper products help the environment by saving energy, water, and trees, and reduces toxins released into the environment.

For more information about buying recycled paper products, including a list of local vendors, go to <http://www.BayAreaRecycling.org> or call the BayROC Hotline, toll-free at 877-786-7926 (877-STOP-WASTE).

Workshop gives tips on the graphic novel

The Albany Library, a branch of the Alameda County Library, will present a new free workshop series for students in grades six through 12: The Graphic Novel Writing Workshops. This series of four consecutive Saturday classes will allow students to create, write, and illustrate their own graphic novels. The workshops will be led by Oliver Chin, author of the graphic novel "Nine of One: A Window to the World," and will be held on March 6, 13, 20 and 27, from 1-3 p.m.

To sign up for this series, call the reference desk at 510-526-3720 ext. 5 or come to the Albany Library at 1247 Marin Ave. Because this is a series, attendance at all four workshops is requested. For more information, call Julie Winkelstein at 510-526-3720 ext. 20.

Chorus will present Faure's 'Requiem'

The Albany Community Chorus will perform Gabriel Faure's "Requiem" at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9 at the Albany United Methodist Church, 980 Stannage Ave.

Directed by Anne Hege, the chorus was founded in 2000 and is run through the Albany Adult School. This non-auditioned chorus has performed a wide range of repertoire including excerpts from the Brahms' Requiem, Berlioz' "The Shepherd's Farewell," Handel's "Messiah," and more modern music.

The chorus will be accompanied by Richard Stephens on the organ and Pat Wong playing the harp. Admission is free and there will be a reception following the concert.

El Cerrito

Readers invited to join book club talks

Anyone interested in reading good books and jumping into discussions is invited to come to El Cerrito's book club, the Page Turners. Started three years ago for students, teachers and parents, Page Turners meets once a month to discuss a current book and choose the next one. Newcomers are always welcome.

The next book is "Black Rain," by Masuji Ibuse. The club will discuss it on Wednesday, March 17 at 7 p.m. at El Cerrito High School in room 604.

Meetings usually last about an hour. For information call Paula Gocker or Joan Cone at 510-524-9560.

More shows scheduled at Down Home

Down Home Music has announced its March, April and May lineup of free, in-store Saturday performances by local and visiting artists. They include: Palm Wine Boys acoustic folk/pop and west African palm wine music, on March 6; Dave Gleason in a rare solo acoustic premiere of tunes from a new CD, on March 20; Wake the Dead, featuring the Celtic roots of the Grateful Dead, on April 24; The Squeeze-Box Social, the Down-Home Accordion Festival with La Familia Pena Govea, Creole Belles and La Bolshevita, on May 1; and the Baguette Quartet, Conjunto Romero and Tsvetan Mitrev Chakurov on May 2. Performances are at 2 p.m.

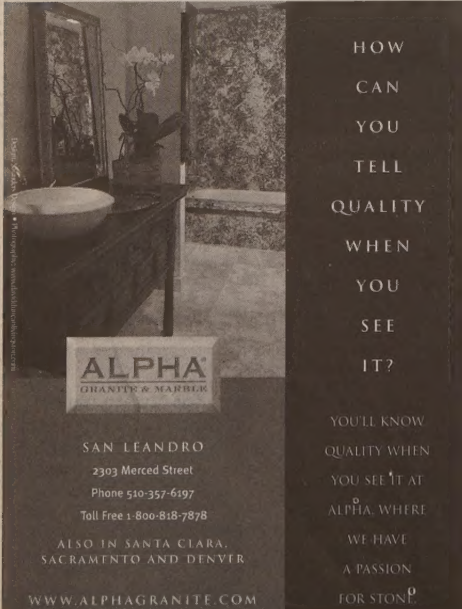
Friends of Cerrito Theater to meet

Residents are invited to attend the next Friends of the Cerrito Theater meeting and sign up for fund-raising activities on Tuesday, March 9 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moers Lane.

The meeting will also include a program presentation relating to theater restoration and updates about the project.

More details are available online at www.cerritotheater.org.

— Journal staff



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ALBANY POLICE REPORTS

Monday, Feb. 23

■ **VANDALS** — Unknown thieves slashed the tires of a black '95 Honda Passport parked near Pomona and Thousand Oaks avenues.

Tuesday, Feb. 24

■ **DONATIONS STOLEN** — During the night, thieves stole donations from the office at St. Alban's Church on the 1500 block of Washington Avenue. There were no witnesses.

■ **ARMED ROBBERY ATTEMPT** — A resident at 555 Pierce St. reported being approached by two subjects who brandished a firearm and demanded he give up his wallet. Police are investigating.

Thursday, Feb. 26

■ **AUTO LOCATED** — Officers located a gray '87 Toyota pickup on the 1300 block of Dartmouth Street that had been reported as stolen. The vehicle was towed and the owner notified.

■ **CAR STOLEN** — A resident at 555 Pierce St. reported that his gray '86 Toyota had been stolen while parked on the street by the fence. There were no witnesses.

■ **AUTO BREAK-IN** — An Albany man reported that thieves had broken into his truck and stole the CD player and other items while it was parked at 555 Pierce St. There were no witnesses.

■ **OUTSTANDING WARRANT** — At about 9 p.m., officers stopped a black '82 Mercedes on the 1100

block of Eastshore Highway for a vehicle code violation. A check of the driver, a 41-year-old Pinole man, found that he had a suspended license and the car registration had expired. He was cited. The passenger, a 37-year-old Antioch woman, was found to have a warrant for driving with a suspended license in the amount of \$1,056. She was arrested, cited and released with a notice to appear. The vehicle was towed.

Friday, Feb. 27

■ **OUTSTANDING WARRANTS** — At about 2 a.m., officers stopped a blue '91 Ford Thunderbird near Central and Pierce streets for a vehicle code violation. They arrested the driver, a 28-year-old Oakland man, for two outstanding Oakland warrants for failure to appear. He was cited and released.

■ **AUTO STOLEN** — Unknown thieves broke into and stole a teal '93 Saturn parked on the 1000 block of Peralta Avenue.

■ **AUTO BREAK-IN** — A resident on the 1100 block of Curtis Street reported that thieves had broken into her black '88 Honda Accord during the night and stolen items from inside. There were no witnesses.

Saturday, Feb. 28

■ **DISORDERLY CONDUCT** — Shortly after midnight, officers responded to reports of juveniles hanging out at Marin School on the 1000 block of Santa Fe Avenue. They arrested two subjects, a 19-year-old Berkeley man and a 19-year-old Emeryville man, for disorderly conduct.

EL CERRITO POLICE REPORTS

Saturday, Feb. 21

■ **VEHICLE THEFT** — Someone stole a white, 1993 Acura Integra two-door from the 600 block of Lexington Avenue on Sunday or Monday.

Sunday, Feb. 22

■ **BURGLARY** — Someone stole more than \$5,000 worth of tools from a home under construction between Sunday evening and Monday morning.

■ **BREAK-IN** — Someone tried to enter a home on the 6800 block of Hagen Boulevard by removing the screen from a bathroom window and trying the window handle.

Monday, Feb. 23

■ **ATTEMPTED BURGLARY** — Someone tried to get into a home on the 6000 block of Jordan Avenue in

the afternoon or early evening by kicking in the front door, but apparently failed.

■ **VEHICLE BURGLARY** — Someone took a cell phone from a vehicle on the 7200 block of View Avenue on either Feb. 23 or 24.

■ **VEHICLE BURGLARY** — Someone took a stereo from a vehicle parked on the 2600 block of Tuller Avenue late Monday or early Tuesday.

■ **VEHICLE BURGLARY** — Someone broke into a vehicle on the 1300 block of Navellier Street and too property late Monday or early Tuesday.

Tuesday, Feb. 24

■ **VEHICLE RECOVERED** — A burgundy 1988 Toyota Camry reported stolen Feb. 15 was found at San Pablo and Wall avenues early in the morning.

ALBANY PTA NEWS

Albany PTA Council

March 10, Drop-In Coffee for Special Ed Parents with Asst. Superintendent Maria Stephenson, 9-10 a.m., Cornell Library, 920 Talbot Ave.

Albany High School

Receive daily bulletin and announcements by e-mail. Contact Linda Okamoto at lopm@earthlink.net

March 5 and 6, Groove Fest, 7 p.m., AHS Little Theater

March 10, AHS Chapter of Albany Music Fund Meeting, 7 p.m., AHS Library

March 10, Embracing Diversity/Films presents "The House We Live In," followed by a facilitated discussion, 7 p.m., AHS Multi-Purpose Room, Free

Scrip Orders: call Norm Rossman at 510-558-0418, e-mail: norm@normski.com 510-526-2018

Albany Middle School

Interested parents may receive the daily bulletin and important announcements by e-mail.

Contact: Frances Santiago at santiagofrances@hotmail.com

Scrip Orders: Call Dorothy Brown at 510-524-3123 or e-mail: dorothy-cmc@yahoo.com

Reminder: Save and turn in General Mills boxtops for education to office.

Cornell Elementary School

Interested parents may receive important announcements by e-mail.

Contact: Barbara Grady-Ayer at gradyayer@aol.com

Scrip Orders: Call Mark Privin 510-528-2082 or e-mail: privwest@pacbell.net

Marin Elementary School

Interested parents may receive impor-

tant announcements by e-mail. Contact Kym Stemer at kymstemer@earthlink.net

March 17, PTA Meeting, 8:30-10 a.m., Marin staff room

Call Helene Class at 510-526-4902 or e-mail: h.class@att.net

Paper Scrip for sale in the office Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:30 a.m. and Monday and Friday at 9:30 a.m.

Reminder: Save and turn in General Mills boxtops for education to office.

Ocean View Elementary

Scrip: Laurie Amaro at 510-525-0476

RECYCLE used computer printer cartridges from your home or office. Look for bins in the library.

AUDS Board of Education

March 9, Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Attention shoppers

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Neighbors

Celebrate a ballfield with Albany Cougars

HIGH-SCHOOL baseball fans in Albany are in for a treat this weekend: a doubleheader between Albany and DeAnza at Cougar Ball Field (behind Albany Middle School, 1259 Brighton) between Key Route and Highway 101, to christen the new infield. The games will be on Saturday, March 6; junior varsity from 10 a.m. to noon, followed by a tailgate party and a varsity game from noon to 3 p.m.

A large crowd is expected, says Karla Rodebush tells us, including many alumni baseball players and fans. A new wireless scoreboard is also on the way, notes, "purchased for a few pennies or two (\$25,000 worth), much of the money from two years of fundraising efforts by parents and supporters.

In addition, Rodebush says, Jim Giblin became head coach in 2002, the Albany Cougars have won the Division 1 and gone on to North Coast regional post league play each year.

Members of El Cerrito Boy Scout Troop 104 were recognized at a Winter Court of Honor at the Herms Boy Scout Center on Feb. 10. The ceremonies are held to recognize the achievement of those Scouts who have completed advancement requirements to move to the next level of Scouting.

Ashik Manandhar, Senior

Patrol Leader, led the Court attended by Scouts, family, supporters and representatives from the Herms District and the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Dustin Mills was awarded the rank of Star, the first step in the senior advancement toward becoming an Eagle Scout. It is gained by demonstrating increased leadership, community service and earning merit badges in six areas of interest.

Timothy Besette was awarded the rank of Second Class, awarded to boys who are able to demonstrate increasing capacity and competency in more advanced skills.

Matt Arciniega, Michael Knight, Mark Kolding were awarded the Tenderfoot Rank, the beginning rank in Scouting, which requires a new Scout to show a proficiency in basic Scout fundamentals.

In addition, these Scouts were presented with the merit badges they have earned: Ethan Houser, Max Gonzales (aviation); Timothy Besette, Willie Gaebler, Joe Clopp, Zachary Houser, Michael Knight (music); Tommy Bolling (personal fitness); Richard Fabini (cycling); Ashik Manandhar (Indian lore, communications).

Also presented were awards acknowledging significant contributions to community service. The following scouts were presented with Service to America award, sponsored by the National Park Service and the Boy Scouts of America, for their contributions in service at Yosemite National Park and in Hawaii:

Nick Dutton, Stephen Lerch, Matt Houser, Harrison Potter, Tony Duffy, Jeffrey Franks, Jed Hubbard, Ethan Houser, Max Gonzales, Philip Dutton, Dustin Mills, Ashik Manandhar, Chris Pangelina, Doug Fabini, Richard Fabini, Jonathan Okada and Charlie Sirchuk.

The following adults associated with the troop were also recognized:

Dan Duffy, Howard Hick-



DUSTIN MILLS receives his Star rank from Scoutmaster Scott Houser at a Court of Honor held in February at Camp Herms in El Cerrito.

man, Bob Fabini, Evan Horowitz, Irwin Horowitz, Donna Houser, Daniel Pangelina and Constance Stasinopoulos.

Boy Scout Troop 104 has been in El Cerrito since 1939 and prides itself on the fact that it is a "boy-run" organization. This means that all activities are managed by a committee of Boy Scout leaders under the guidance of a parent committee. Troop 104 is not affiliated with any outside organization and takes full responsibility for all fund-raising.

For the past three consecutive years, Troop 104 has earned and

been recognized as the "Presidential Troop" at the annual Camporee, a gathering of all troops within the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council, where troops compete in a three-day set of activities testing their knowledge of the fundamentals of Scouting and capacity for teamwork. Troop 104 has earned the distinction of being the highest-rated troop in the Council for the past three years.

For more on Boy Scout Troop 104, call Scott Houser, Scoutmaster, 510-234-2251 or Ken Lerch 510-527-2457, advancement chairman.

— Journal staff

Vukasins have had a peerless run in East Bay

GEORGE VUKASIN is a lucky man. If you don't believe it, just ask him. "I'm doing what I love, surrounded by my family," he says.

"Who could ask for anything more?"

Vukasin is the CEO of Peerless Coffee, the pioneering Oakland firm that made custom roasting fashionable long before Peet's and Starbucks were gleams in their owners' eyes.

Peerless is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year; and although it's the largest custom coffee roaster in the Western U.S., it's still a mom-and-pop business. Vukasin is the CEO; his wife, Sonja, is president; their son, George Jr., is executive vice president; and their daughter, Katrina, is company counsel.

(Another daughter, Michelle, has moved to Houston, but her parents dutifully send her five pounds of her favorite, President's Blend — 40 percent Colombian supreme, 40 percent Antigua, and 20 percent French roast — every three weeks.)

Peerless was founded in 1924 by Vukasin's father, John, aka "Mr. V." (And his wife, Natalie, was called "Mrs. V.") John was only 14 when he came here from his native Yugoslavia, completely alone except for his brother, Nicholas, who was a year older.

"Just as you see with today's immigrants, the center of the community was the local church," says Vukasin. "In my father's case, it was St. George Serbian Orthodox Church on Oak Street. He met my mother there, they were married there, and I was baptized there. Our children and grandchildren were baptized there, too."

And, just as today, many immigrants opened inexpensive restaurants along Webster Street. John Vukasin didn't think he could compete with them, so he decided to supply them with coffee, instead.

Only one problem: He didn't know a thing about coffee. So he started hanging out with the



MARTIN SNAPP
Snapp Shots

people who did — coffee brokers — and soaking up everything he could learn.

Eventually, he made himself into one of the greatest coffee "cuppers" of his generation. (A cupper is somebody who evaluates bouquet, softness, acidity, strength, and other subtle qualities — as opposed to a taster, who just determines whether the stuff is palatable or not.) "Mr. V." taught his son three things: Work hard, love your family, and give back to your community. And George has passed the tradition on to his children.

George Jr. is a big supporter of the Boys and Girls Clubs, Meals on Wheels, Project Open Hand, and a program that rehabilitates schools after natural disasters in coffee-producing countries. Kristina is director of the 100 Club of Alameda County, which provides financial help to families of police and firefighters killed in the line of duty. She has also established scholarships for young coffee growers in Colombia.

George has a program in Colombia, too: providing incentives to farmers to grow coffee instead of the country's other big cash crop — cocaine. Not surprisingly, it's earned him enemies among the drug lords. Whenever he flies to Bogota to confer with government officials, they surround him with armed bodyguards and move him to a different safe house every night.

Closer to home, he was for many years head of the Oakland-Alameda Coliseum, back in the good old days when the Coliseum was one of the most pleasant places in the Bay Area. It was safe, it was clean, and it had a cozy, extended-family feeling, whether you were tailgating in the parking lot before a Raider game or shmoozing with the other fans in your section during an A's game.

Then the politicians took over. They kicked out Vukasin and his board of directors without so much as a fare-thee-well.

It was a shabby way to treat people after so many years of faithful service; but, to his credit, Vukasin has never uttered a public word of criticism.

It must be tempting, as the politicians keep piling fiasco on fiasco. (Falling attendance, rising tuggery, personal seat licenses, Mount Davis — the list goes on and on.) But going negative isn't his style. He's too busy counting his blessings. And enjoying his coffee.

Reach Martin Snapp at 510-262-2787 or e-mail msnapp@ectimes.com.

Forum on commonly misdiagnosed auto-immune disease

DO YOU HAVE dry eyes, dry mouth, joint pain or fatigue? If you have answered yes to any or all of these, it is possible that you suffer from the auto-immune disorder known as Sjogren's Syndrome.

Because Sjogren's Syndrome is so little-known, yet so widely suffered, Ruth Fremes and Dr. Nancy Carteron, authors of "A Body Out of Balance: Understanding and Treating Sjogren's Syndrome," are offering a free, public symposium on Sjogren's Syndrome in April.

Sjogren's Syndrome is an auto-immune disorder said to affect 4 million Americans, mostly women. "If you already have an auto-immune disorder, your chance of having SjS is greater. Because of a lack of awareness by both the public and the medical community,



CLARA-RAE GENSER
Community Folk

SjS often goes undiagnosed, causing difficulties for the patient and frustration for the doctor."

Local resident Ruth Fremes and her doctor, Nancy Carteron, know this personally, for Fremes suffered for years with the vague, but debilitating symptoms before she found Carteron, a rheumatologist, who finally diagnosed her problem. Dry mouth, dry eyes, joint pain, fatigue: These symptoms could point to so many disorders.

Ruth Fremes, in her fore-

word to the book, remembers all the advice she received before meeting Carteron: Exercise. Live a normal life. Try not to think about it.

"This advice rattled round in my head as I sat in the doctor's office and tried to make sense of his words while trying to ignore the tiredness, pain, dry eyes, and numb feet that overwhelmed me. Goodness knows, I wanted to follow his prescription. I just couldn't seem to. Every effort was too much; every body movement hurt; every blink of an eye burned."

In her introduction, Carteron writes, "In my experience, patients with auto-immune diseases have an even more difficult path than those with acute diseases. Auto-immune diseases are variable, chronic and often begin when the patient is quite young and so last a lifetime."

She goes on to say that our health care system, which focuses on the "cure" of an illness, rather than its management, is further confounding. "It takes patience, detective work, and research, but answers can be found and treatment and healing plans can be designed."

For the April 3 symposium, Carteron and Fremes have gathered a panel which, in addition to Carteron, includes Michael Cantwell, a specialist in integrative medicine, Karen Oxford, an ophthalmologist and Dan Phillips, a dentist. All of these specialties are important for sufferers from SjS.

Sjogren's Syndrome was discovered by a Swedish ophthalmologist, Henrik Sjogren, who, along with his ophthalmologist wife, observed that a large number of his patients with chronic arthritis were also

suffering dry eyes and dry mouth.

Their further investigation led to the naming and understanding of this disease, which is now recognized as one of the most common but often undiagnosed of the 56 known auto-immune diseases.

Ruth Fremes was a broadcast journalist in her native Toronto, including having her own radio show on food and nutrition. Fremes worked as a consultant to the National Cancer Institute, the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation and the National Dietetic Association.

Do you know people, places or groups in El Cerrito, Albany or Kensington that would make good subjects for this column? If so, please write me at 555 Pierce St., No. 443, Albany, CA 94706 or call 510-525-4585. My e-mail is crgenser@aol.com.

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10 am to 2 pm
Celebrate California Agriculture with
The Season's Freshest Fruits and
Vegetables Artisan Breads & Pastries

The West Alameda Farmer's Market is open every Tuesday, 9:30 am - 1 pm Year round, rain or shine, and is located at Webster & Taylor.

The Jack London Square Farmer's Market is open every Sunday, 10 am - 2 pm Year round, rain or shine, and is located at Jack London Square, Broadway & Embarcadero.

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THE JOURNAL

"... were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

— Thomas Jefferson

EDITORIAL

JEFF HANSEN • HILLS NEWSPAPERS

Failure of schools tax sends a poor message

VOTERS IN THE West Contra Costa school district on Tuesday rejected Measure J, the parcel tax that would have brought the schools \$7.5 million annually for five years.

Meanwhile, voters narrowly passed state Proposition 55, a \$12.3 billion school facilities bond issue. And the passage of Proposition 57, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's \$15 billion fiscal recovery bond, is expected to help school districts.

While the state bonds' passage is cause for some hope, the no vote on the parcel tax must have sent some sort of message to the schools.

But what message would that be?

We can't see into the hearts and minds of all those voters, so we're left with what the opposition stated, which was that district officials were to blame for the district's budget problems and shouldn't be trusted with more taxpayer dollars.

Which only leads us to ask: Aren't these people paying attention?

Are they unaware that the entire state is in a near-constant budget crisis?

Have they noticed that other school districts around the Bay also are in trouble financially? Several also tried for parcel taxes, with varying success.

While those who voted no probably think they've sent a message of fiscal responsibility to the district's board, to us it looks more like a message to students, teachers and parents.

And that message is: We don't care about you.

The parcel tax was created from the grass roots up, with community input. It had a sunset clause; it would have lasted just five years. There was an exemption for senior citizens. It was targeted at specific goals: textbook purchases, keeping classes smaller, hiring aides and counselors.

It's safe to say that no one moves to West County because of our excellent schools. In fact, most of us who still live here probably know at least one family who went into deep debt to leave this area for places such as Walnut Creek or Lafayette — for the better schools.

Some highly motivated students with supportive families will do well no matter where they go to school — in fact, many of the best colleges give a student extra consideration for overcoming, having survived and made the best of a below-average school district.

But surely that sort of character-building is not something we'd try to engineer on purpose?

Some talented and hard-working teachers are able to inspire students no matter where they teach. Those are the teachers who spend their own money on supplies — often just basic supplies, such as paper and pencils.

All over the school district, parents and service groups band together and devote time and money for various goals: trips, band or sports uniforms, books, even landscaping.

Those are the people to whom the no voters said: Sorry, no help here.

Shame on them. Shame on us.

Meanwhile, though the parcel tax failed, voters also overturned the county prohibition of super-size stores in unincorporated areas. That's the measure Wal-Mart paid more than \$500,000 to defeat.

So we guess the message to those students who have been so clearly told they don't matter is: Hey, it's not so bad that your community wouldn't support your school — at least now once you graduate, you're more likely to find a low-paying, dead-end job closer to home.

YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

House of Representatives

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Ellen Tauscher: (D-10th District) 2121 N. California Blvd., Suite 555, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 925-932-8899 or 1034 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515; 202-225-1880. E-mail through ww.house.gov/tauscher

State Senate

Don Perata: (D-9th District) State Capitol, Room 4061, Sacramento, CA 95814, 916-445-6577. Fax: 916-327-1997; 1515 Clay St., No. 2202, Oakland, CA 94612, 510-286-1333. Fax: 510-286-3885. E-mail: senator.perata@sen.ca.gov.

Tom Torlakson: (D-7th District) 2801 Concord Blvd., Concord CA 94519; 800-859-9900 or State Capitol, Room 2068, Sacramento CA 95814; 916-445-6083, e-mail: senator.torlakson@sen.ca.gov

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EBMUD

David Richardson: Ward No. 4 (Albany, Berkeley, and Emeryville, part of Oakland; El Cerrito and Kensington. E-mail: Oakport@igc.org

East Bay Regional Parks

Jean Siri: Ward 1 (Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Kensington, part of Pinole, and San Pablo). E-mail: jsiri@ebparks.org

AC Transit

Joe Wallace: (Ward 1). E-mail: jwallace@actransit.org; phone 510-891-7143; fax 510-234-7689.

Stege Sanitary District

Phone 510-524-4668 or see online at www.stegesd.dst.ca.us.

Cities

El Cerrito: City offices, 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, 510-215-4300. E-mail: citycouncil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Albany: City offices, 1000 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-528-5710.

Kensington: Fire Protection District 217 Arlington Blvd. 510-527-8395
Police Protection and Community Services District 217 Arlington Blvd. 510-526-4141

School boards

West Contra Costa Unified School District: 510-620-2246

Albany Unified School District: 510-558-3766

PROPOSALS. PROPOSITIONS.
THEY'RE ALL THE SAME TO ME.
NO THANKS.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A frightening prospect

The thought of a federal constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage should terrify every American. As the blueprint for our nation, the Constitution is premised, in part, upon the principle that all people are entitled to equal protection of the laws.

A "marriage amendment" of the type now supported by President Bush would inject inequality into the Constitution by affirmatively denying a fundamental right to a group of citizens for no other reason than their partner's gender. We would be left with an internally inconsistent statement of our country's guiding principles and a Constitution with greatly diminished credibility and authority.

That is a frightening prospect, because we can be certain that the Constitution will be called upon in the future to halt other forms of discrimination. Whether it will be as effective as it has in the past is now in question.

Michael Chamberlain
El Cerrito

Foolish waste

Councilwoman Gina Brusatori has provided a truly great service with her commentary about the Cerrito Theater in the Jan. 30 issue of The Journal.

The information provided in the piece confirms what I have feared all along: This would be the most wasteful and egregious misuse of redevelopment funds ever by our city.

Where are our priorities? I simply cannot believe even a simple majority of the taxpaying voters would support emptying our treasury for such foolish and disastrous waste.

Tom Smithberger
El Cerrito

Poorly conceived plan

Anyone who tries to maneuver Fairmont Avenue and El Cerrito Plaza by car or on foot knows how inadequately planned the traffic patterns are leading to and within the Plaza.

Now the city and developers want to add a BART garage and 100 condos to an area of the Plaza which is the most inaccessible. Increased car and pedestrian traffic will create a virtual gridlock in the area.

The plan is for fee parking, even for the residents of the condos. Some 100 to 200 more cars will be added to the area. Obviously, many of the residents will try to park for free by taking up spaces in the Plaza parking lot and the access streets in Albany. Add to this the cars of BART commuters.

This is a poorly conceived plan. Let the city know how bad it really is.

Diane Friis
El Cerrito

Soft on national security

Not only has Russia rendered Bush's proposed missile defense system ineffective before it can be deployed, but the Pentagon had already admitted that the system could not be proved effective!

Worse, as a recent successful Russian test demonstrated, the mere threat of a missile defense system forces a destabilizing new arms race on the world.

Worse yet? Bush's unprovable, destabilizing — and now obsolete — missile defense boondoggle has sapped funds from proven programs, such as the Nunn-Lugar initiative to dismantle existing war-

heads and employ former weapons scientists, which actually increase security.

This in the context of Bush's proposals for a further destabilizing expansion of the nuclear arsenal.

I wonder if the Democratic nominee will make good on his myriad opportunities to attack Bush as soft on national security this election year.

James B. Endres
Albany

Censure Bush

In an effort to gain support for his war against Iraq, President Bush stated we faced "clear evidence of peril." George Tenet has recently said that was never true.

Then, in an effort to scare us into agreeing with him, Bush said the threat "could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."

Combined with the Patriot Act, these statements remind me of McCarthyism: powerful men creating fear and hysteria and silencing dissension as a way of achieving what they want.

And the policies of this war seem just as farfetched as those of the Red Scare. Shock and Awe did not work. What was promised to be a short, painless war has stretched on for almost a year now — one in which more than 500 Americans have been killed and some 3,000 injured.

The war has cost more than \$150 billion so far and there has been no mention of it in the budget for 2005, which means the money to continue it will have to be taken from other programs.

I call on Congress to censure President Bush and hold him accountable for his actions. Clinton was censured for lying about an affair — an offense far less grievous than creating panic to garner support for a personal vendetta.

Lina Swislocki
El Cerrito

Library replacement

The city is pushing to make a hasty approval of a plan for the public library to be part of a commercial/residential/parking garage structure on one of the busiest streets in El Cerrito, at the far southern edge of the city.

Currently, students from Fairmont, Portola and El Cerrito High schools, and many residents have walking access to the library, where parking is free.

Since the city will have to float a bond to cover this construction, why can't a bond be floated for a library as part of a civic/community center in a more central location?

Even if it means waiting a little longer for a large user-friendly library, maybe it would be worth the wait.

Grace MacNeill
El Cerrito

Presidential leadership

Boy, do we have a great president. He gives us tax rebates with one hand and with the other hand soon will take away some Social Security and Medicare benefits, as Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan said last week. According to him, this move is to lower a tremendous national deficit (in part created by the tax rebates) that threatens our future prosperity.

If President Bush is sincere about protecting the sanctity of marriage, he should concentrate upon a much greater threat to the sanctity of marriage than the posed by an insignificant number of gay couples. Bush should work to eliminate divorce among the roughly 40 percent of couples who make a mockery of marriage when they break up, traumatizing a multitude of women and children, bitterly living in broken homes. That would be Godly!

I believe Bush's proposed constitutional amendment, if pursued, will harm fire and harm his chances of re-election.

Sidney Kagan
Albany

America's national parks

Although the president's proposed budget includes cuts to many domestic programs, the national parks are slated to receive a small increase for day-to-day needs.

But this victory is short-lived, because the increased funding, little more than 1 percent, will be offset by mandatory cost-of-living increases for park staff and other expenses. As a result of flat budgets, inflation, more than 300 national park sites nationwide will actually be operating with less money and staff than was available last year.

National parks are operating, on average, with only two-thirds of the needed funding, an annual system-wide shortfall in excess of \$600 million.

Americans have been locked out of the Statue of Liberty for two years, educational staff and programs have been cut in national parks across the country, poachers are stealing America's heritage by killing wildlife and pilfering plants and artifacts for profit.

We cannot afford to fail our national treasures. Congress members George Miller, Barbara Lee and Ellen Tauscher should help to ensure that adequate funding is provided for the annual needs of our national parks.

Richard H. Barstow
El Cerrito

More Bush illogic

We now not only have "Hardball" TV, but also "Creampuff."

In his interview of the president, Tom Russert was strangely silent when Bush finally declared that "being able to possess dangerous weapons is the same as possessing them."

At that point, Russert might have asked whether Bush was declaring preemptive war on the whole world, since nearly all countries are able to produce poison gas, nerve gas and dangerous biological weapons.

Max Altman
Albany

HOW TO REACH US

Letters to the editor reflect the opinion of the writer. Letters must include your first and last name, address and daytime phone number. All letters are subject to verification. All letters are subject to editing for brevity and style. Not all letters may be published.

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Quick book reviews needed for column

of the week: reading furnishes the mind with materials of knowledge. It is thinking makes what we read ours." John Locke, 1632-1704



JULIE WINKELSTEIN
At the Library

WHEN I WAS in elementary school, one of the assignments I most was book reports. The part was fine — I liked all kinds of books, con- But I never wanted to report about any of them. I mentioned this to a teacher and she asked him if he felt about book reports. He said, "I like writing them." I told him, they always busy work and, he seemed like it was a way to prove I had read a book. I think that was part of the problem for me, too. I liked to read, but I didn't need someone to tell me I did it. In fact, I al- didn't want to read a book. It meant I then had to write about it later. The other part about book

reports was the description of the story and the characters. What was it about? I would be asked. Who was your favorite character? How does the story relate to your own life? These questions made me feel as if the book was separate from me. It pulled me away and forced me to look at it critically — something I didn't want to do. I knew — know, I guess I should say, since I still feel the same way — that books are written by people, they don't just appear. But there is something magical about a book you love; it takes you to a place that you live in while you're reading. As a friend of mine once said, "It was the kind of book where you won-

der what the characters are doing when you're not reading it." To focus on the story as if it didn't exist, as if it weren't a real world, took away that wonderful feeling of living in the book.

I understand teachers assign book reports to help children look more closely at the books they've read and to see how reading a book can affect how they think and feel. And I know there are children who like to write the reports — I had friends who didn't mind at all.

In fact, I'm hoping there are some of those people out there right now because, I have to admit, I actually started writing this column to solicit book reviews for this column.

Writing a book review is simpler than writing a book report and you don't have to analyze anything. Basically, I want to hear from people who have read a book they enjoyed — not necessarily a bestseller or even a new book — just an en- grossing one. I have book re-

view forms, but would be happy to accept e-mails, too. The basic structure is: Title, author, a brief description of what the book is about, a word to describe it and a sentence about why you would recom- mend it. That's it.

So, if you aren't like me and you don't mind doing it, I'd love to hear from you.

READER REVIEW: This week's book review is from Clementine and the book is Ben Mikaelson's "Petey." This book is about "the life of a man who is born with severe cere- bral palsy and how, after years in an institution, someone dis- covers he has a normal mind trapped in an inflexible body." One word Clementine would use to describe this book is "moving" and she recom- mends it because "it gave me insights into the human potential for caring."

Reach librarian Julie Winkel- stein at jwinkelstein@acclibrary.org or at the Albany Li- brary.

Secret to keeping your wits sharp is a puzzle



CONNIE LYNCH
Don't Lose Your Mind

NOW TO THE FINAL of the four components of superior mental fitness — Willingness to accept mental challenges. Never back away from a prob- lem without at least trying to solve it. An accumulation of years sometimes makes people unwilling to put forth the effort to find answers to questions

put to them. If these questions are related to everyday puzzle- solving, the immediate lack of effort is unlikely to be impor- tant, but if the problem in- volves one's life, it may lead to a loss of independence and control. No one wants to lose control, to rely on others to make important decisions.

Some day you may be called upon to make a decision that will affect your entire life. You must be able to analyze what is happening, the possible effects of your decision, and how best to stay in control. If you have been accepting other mental challenges, you will feel far more competent to handle a truly serious problem. Be prepared. None of us wants to let others make decisions for us.

Certainly, an obvious begin- ning to becoming more compe- tent would be to try to solve simple puzzles with which you come in contact. (I know I have said this again and again, but it is important enough to warrant being said even more).

Your problem-solving abil- ities are essential to retaining your mental fitness, and they may be improved with a bit of effort. You must be willing to keep trying, to build your abil- ity level, and in so doing also build your confidence level.

In my Mind Works classes, I always give weekly problem solving assignments — by re- quest, incidentally — and occa- sionally a new participant will refuse to consider it.

"Why would I want to do that?" is a comment I often hear in such a situation. An answer that I could give is "Be- cause it's there, and I feel that you would benefit from it."

Needless to say, all assigned work addresses the mental fit- ness components. Solving a new problem makes us feel special, confident, and more competent. Awareness of de- tails involved in that particular problem and the need to com- municate the results discovered in its solution involve the first two components.

Curiosity and willingness to accept the challenge are also vital to solving a given puzzle. As you can see, curiosity is a very important part of the will- ingness to accept mental chal- lenges. Even though I have given a ranking to each of the four components of mental fit- ness, they are all strongly re- lated, and their interaction is of immense importance.

Take responsibility for re- maining mentally active. At one time, it was considered normal to lose mental abilities just be- cause one was getting older. That idea has been proven false. It has now been discov- ered that using the brain and learning things results in the production of new connections and brain growth.

This ends the series of the four components of mental fit- ness. Try to achieve proficiency in all of them. You will find it well worth the effort.

E-mail inquiries for Kensington resident Connie Lynch to conniemw@aol.com. Lynch, Ph.D. is the founder of Mind Works, a mental fitness program de- signed for older adults and is the author of the book, "Don't Lose Your Mind, Four Compo- nents of Superior Mental Fit- ness." For information on books and classes, call 510-466-5833.

LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Next Second Wednesday Poetry Writing Workshop at Albany Library will meet at 10, from 7 to 9 p.m., in the Stone Room. The free workshop is for all ages and is by Danna Zeller. Light re- ceptions will be served. At Albany: Preschool Story Time for Springtime will take place Saturdays at the Albany Li- brary at 11 a.m. The new series begins March 6 through April 10, from 3 to 6. The programs are from the AARP are free tax help for tax- payers with middle and low in- come, with special attention to 60 years and older, at the library on Thursdays from 12:30 to 2 p.m. through April. Make appointments at the Library's Reference Desk. At Albany Library and the Contra Costa County Bar Association will provide legal assistance at the library in the "Lawyer in the Li- brary" program on the first Tues- day of each month. To schedule a 15-minute consulta- tion with an attorney, call the li- brary Reference Desk at 510-466-5833, ext. 5. Advance

registration is required. The next dates are March 2, April 6, May 4 and June 1.

The Albany Library, a branch of the Alameda County Library, is at 1247 Marin Ave. Informa- tion: 510-526-3720 ext. 20.

The next Family Story Time at the El Cerrito Library will be held Saturday, March 13. Chil- dren ages 3 and up and their families are invited to the library at 11 a.m. for a special family story time entitled "Dog Stories and Crafts." After listening to stories about dogs and participating in some doggy songs, fingerplays and stretches, each child will make a "Puppy, Paws Picture Frame" with special guests from Contra Costa Animal Services — Tracey and her waggy-tailed friend, Holly.

Also at El Cerrito: Frederik L. Schodt will speak about Japan on Tuesday, March 9 at 7 p.m. Schodt is the author of "Land of the Shogun: Ranald MacDonald and the Opening of Japan." In 1848 MacDonald, a half-Scott, half-Chinook adventurer from the Pacific Northwest landed on an island off Hokkaido. Although

promptly arrested and impris- oned for seven months in Na- gasaki, the intelligent, well-edu- cated MacDonald became one of their first teachers of English and Western ways. Schodt has writ- ten extensively on Japan, in- cluding "America and the Four Japans" and "Inside the Robot Kingdom." In this presentation, he will read from his book and show slides of Japan.

The El Cerrito Library, a branch of the Contra Costa County Library, is at 6510 Stock- ton Ave. For details, call 510-526-7512.

The Friends of the Kensing- ton Library host special Tuesday night programs. Next up: On March 16 at 7 p.m., master ma- gician Alex Gonzalez returns with his sophisticated magic show. Tickets required; available beginning Monday, March 8.

Family Storytimes for all ages are held on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. (except when special programs are scheduled). The Kensington Library, a branch of the Contra Costa County Library, is at 61 Ar- lington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707-1098. Phone: 510-524-

3043.

The Richmond Public Li- brary hosts free films in Spanish with English subtitles on the second Thursday of the month, sponsored by the Latino Film Festival of the San Francisco Bay Area and the Friends of the Rich- mond Public Library.

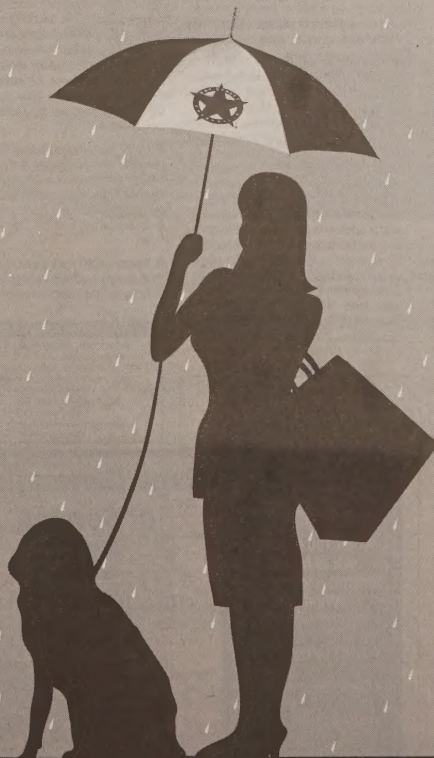
Next up: On March 11, at 7 p.m., it's "Bolívar Soy Yo" ("Bo- lívar I Am"), directed by Jorge Alí Triana (Colombia, 2001, 93 minutes). It's about a soap-opera actor who begins to think he is the character he plays, the "Great Liberator," Simón Bolívar. This leads him to attempt fulfilling Bolívar's dream: to create a united South America. It won the Mar de Plata and Toulouse Film Festi- val.

Films are shown in the Made- line F. Whittlesley Community Room, adjacent to the main li- brary. (Note: Due to budget cuts, the Library will be closed at 5 p.m. Enter through the patio to the left of the library.)

The Richmond Public Library is at 325 Civic Center Plaza in Richmond. 510-620-6561.

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Calendar

Submissions to the Community Calendar must be received Thursdays one week prior to publication. Listings are on a space-available basis. Mail submissions to Ann Fields, 1969 Mountain Blvd., Oakland, CA 94611; e-mail to afields@ccclines.com or fax to 510-339-4066.

Children

■ **Cal Shakes Theater Lab** offers a child's introduction to Orchestral Instruments Sunday March 14, 3 p.m. at the Pacific Academy, 1615 Carlson Blvd., Richmond. Call 527-6202 for more information. \$10 per family; suitable for young children. Spring Theater Lab 2004 Performance Workshop and Introduction to Improvisation, for students ages 13-18, take place on Saturdays: March 6 to April 24. All classes are at Cal Shakes Rehearsal Hall-701 Heinz Ave. Berkeley. For more information regarding the classes and tuition, call 510-548-3422 x. 127 or e-mail learn@calshakes.org.

■ **Anna Belle Parish** offers preschool drama activity for children ages 2½ to 5 years with parents at Toy-go-Round, 1361 Solano Ave., Albany. Children will "try on" characters and engage in group dramatic activity. Drop in, held monthly on third Tuesday. No charge. For more information, call Anna Belle at 510-527-1437.

■ **Children's Social Skills and Manners** workshops are offered in Albany on Saturdays for two hours, 3 to 5 p.m. Each workshop lasts for four weeks. Details: Linda, 527-6202.

■ **Teen Support Group** meets twice a month Tuesday evenings at the Women's Cancer Resource Center, 3023 Shattuck Ave. The free group is for teens who have a parent or caregiver with cancer. The meeting is co-facilitated by a teen whose mother had breast cancer. 531-7551.

■ Check out books from the **Berkeley Richmond Jewish Community Center Library**. Spend quality time with your kids, meet with the children's librarian, research your Jewish roots or check out best sellers. The library is at 1414 Walnut St. Hours: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays. 848-0237.

■ **El Cerrito offers special programs for children** from 22 months to 5 years of age designed to offer parents an opportunity to leave their pre-school children in a safe atmosphere under qualified supervision. The program for ages 22 months to 3½ years meets Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon. Registration is continuous as long as space is available. Located at 7007 Mooser Lane. 215-4371.

■ The Ann Martin Children's Center offers eight "Support Groups For Mothers," sessions for first time mothers and babies their babies under 5 months. Experienced facilitator. Details: 524-0821. Classes

Class

■ **Epic Arts** continues its production of "The Bright River," a show by Tim Barsky and the Everyday Theater Thursday-Saturday through March 20, at the Transparent Theatre, 1901 Ashby Ave. (at MLK). Berkeley. Doors open at 8 p.m. Barsky and Company combine hip-hop, physical theatre, and Jewish folklore for an astonishing effect. Tickets are \$14-20 on a sliding scale, \$12 in advance. No show March 11. Call Epic Arts at 510-644-2204, for more information or directions to the Theatre.

■ **South Berkeley Senior Center** 2939 Ellis St., offers a free aerobics, stretching, strengthening fitness class for adults 55+. The class is taught by Naomi Puro. For more information, call 510-981-5170.

Community

■ The third annual **International Women's Month** in March in Berkeley features the following events: Story Dressmaking Workshop with artist, Patricia Bullitt from 1 to 4 p.m. March 13, at the Live Oak Center, Live Oak Park, 1301 Shattuck Ave. at Berryman St.

(Handicapped ok entrance) Cost: \$25 to \$50 per person at door. Suggested for age 8 and older. Bring art supplies such as paint, glue, stapler, scissors. Photos, buttons, ribbons. The workshop features singer Bekka Fink, of SF Mime Troupe. Exhibition of story dresses at performance next day; Storytelling Women Performance at 3 p.m. March 14. Presenting: Patricia Bullitt, dancer/storyteller, Bekka Fink, Singer/composer, Ruth Halpern, Storyteller, Shanti and Rami Ramrattan, South Indian Classical Dancers Nancy Schimmel, Storyteller. Cost: \$15 to \$35 per person. No one turned away for lack of funds. Location for both performances: Live Oak Center, Live Oak Park, 1301 Shattuck Ave. For more information, call 510-841-8612.

■ **University of California Botanical Garden** at Berkeley, 200 Centennial Drive, offers a one-day conference filled with new ideas, exciting curriculum, practical and clever tips and techniques for starting or enhancing gardens in Bay Area Schools. Workshops will begin at the Lawrence Hall of Science and move to the UC Botanical Garden. Saturday, March 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The conference offers best practices in integrating gardens at schools and sustaining them throughout the year. Joint teachers, school volunteers, and youth gardening enthusiasts in a roundtable of hands-on activities with lots of take away resources. \$10 for everyone. For more information call 510-495-2801.

■ Women's history lecture series 2-4 p.m. March 7, at the Berkeley Historical Society Veterans Memorial Building, 1931 Center St., Berkeley. Author Barbara R. Stein will present a portrait of Annie Alexander (1867-1950), an amateur naturalist and skilled markswoman, who as benefactor of two natural history museums at UC Berkeley, shaped the study of science in California. Admission free. Call 510-848-0181. www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/histoc/

■ **Charcot Marie Tooth** support group meets quarterly from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Albany Library, 1247 Marine Ave. CMT is a neuropathic disorder. For more information, call Gail Whitehouse at 408-425-5629.

■ **The Judah L. Magnes Museum**, 2911 Russell St., presents the exhibit "Brought to Light: The Storied Collections of the Judah L. Magnes Museum" through April 25. Hours: Open Sunday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Closed Jewish and federal holidays. Admission is free. For more information, call 510-549-6950.

■ **Berkeley Neighborhood Computers**, a non-profit organization, provides high-value and high-demand computer technology training for disadvantaged and at-risk individuals. The organization seeks computers and networking equipment to be used for training purposes. All donations are tax deductible. 845-1226 or e-mail bnc@netvalve.net.

■ **Berkeley Camera Club** meet Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley. Share slides and prints, learn what other photographers are doing. Monthly field trips. Details: 525-3565.

■ **TOPS** (Take Pounds Off Sensibly) Chapter CA 1294 meets Thursdays, 7:15-8:30 p.m. Thursday at Mira Vista UCC Church, 7075 Cutting Blvd. TOPS is a non-profit organization assisting men and women in weight control. Betty Coates at 235-4090.

■ **Turning Point** at the YWCA, 2600 Bancroft Way, sponsors Resume Clinics on Tuesday afternoons, or by appointment. For an appointment, leave a message several days before you would like to meet. Anne Levine has a background in design and education. Call 848-6370.

■ **Berkeley's Office of Emergency Services** presents a new series of free Community Emergency Response Training classes. The classes give basic, practical information, including hands-on training in fire suppression, light search and rescue, and disaster first aid. All classes are held at the fire department's Emergency Operations Center, 997 Cedar St. The classes are open to everyone, 18 or older, who lives or works in Berkeley. Register: 644-8736.

■ **Berkeley Art Museum**, Pacific Film Archive offers a guided tour of Equal

Partner: Men and Women Principals in Contemporary Architectural Practice presented by graduate students from the UC Berkeley Department of Architecture, College of Environmental Design on alternating Thursdays at 12:15 p.m. and on Sundays at 2 p.m. 642-0808.

■ **Overeaters Anonymous** meet Fridays at 1:30 p.m. at the Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley, 941 The Alameda between Solano and Marin avenues, in Room 2—the child-care room—parents may bring their children. This organization is for individuals who eat compulsively. 525-5231.

■ **Toastmasters**, do it now. Stand up and say what you mean. Come practice—Tuesday, noon to 1 p.m. at 700 Heinz Ave. Call 883-6708 for details.

■ **Civil Rights activists** needed. Write the ACLU chapter of Berkeley, Albany, Richmond, and Kensington. P.O. Box 11141, Berkeley, CA., 94701.

■ **"Work Buddies"**; volunteers needed to work with people in early stage Alzheimer's Disease. Minimum six-month commitment, two to three hours per week. Training provided. Contact Nannette Lipton, 644-8292.

Exhibits

■ **"Super Six"**, an exhibition featuring six bay area artists opens March 3 through March 7, at Giorgi Gallery, 2911 Claremont Ave. Artists include Cassie Davis, Megan DeArmond, John Poole, Matthew Scheatzle, Mark Seely, and Becca Jo Young. A reception is from 6 to 9 p.m. March 6. For more information, call 510-848-1228 or Megan DeArmond at megarocbe@yahoo.com.

■ **The Fourth Studio** (The Art Gym) at 1717 D Fourth St., Berkeley, will host a theme show "Levels of Abstraction" from 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 28. The show features the work of artists Asha Menghrajani, Mark Popple and E. Taylor. Music by jazz musicians, Gold Standard, begins at 8 p.m. Free. Call 510-527-0600 for more information.

■ **The color photography of Stephen Palmer**, UC Berkeley professor of Cognitive Science, will be on display in an exhibit entitled "The Art of Perception" at the Albany Community Center Foyer Gallery, 1249 Marin Ave., Albany, from through April 18. These photographs highlight unusual visual situations such as geometric structure and symmetry in natural patterns and striking color contrasts between figure and ground. Gallery hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m. and 10 a.m. on Saturday. A reception for the artist will be held Jan. 25 from 4-6 p.m.

■ The exhibit **Early Women of Berkeley** (1878-1953) and their organizations runs through March 27. The exhibit, curated by the College Women's Club/Berkeley Branch of the American Association of University Women and the Berkeley Historical Society, celebrates how women shaped Berkeley's history, working alone and through their clubs. A women's history lecture series is also planned. At the Berkeley History Center, 1931 Center St. Details: 648-0181. Admission free.

Film/dance/stage

■ **Author Frederik L. Schodt** will speak at 7 p.m. March 9, El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Ave. Schodt is the author of "Native American in the Land of the Shogun: Ronald MacDonald and the Opening of Japan." Schodt has written extensively on Japan, including "America and the Four Japans" and "Inside the Robot Kingdom." In this presentation, he will read from his book and show slides of Japan. Call 510-526-7512 for more information.

■ **Paratheatrical Research** presents "Orphans of Delirium" a series of performance rites incorporating Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" at 9 p.m. March 13 and 14, 2525 Eighth St. Berkeley. There will be live sounds and music by Sybil All. This rare presentation of "Orphans of Delirium" exhibits a series of paratheatrical rites loosely linked by the stories of a poet gone delirious from the loss of loved ones and compounded by abstinence addiction. \$10, suggested donation. Performances will be videotaped for an experimental documentary by Antero Alli. Audience may be videotaped. Those attending are asked to sign a release form. A second performance takes place at 9 p.m. March 21, at CELLspace, 2050 Bryant in San Francisco.



THE HOT CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO performs at the Jazzschool, 2087 Addison St. in Berkeley Sunday, March 7, at 4:30 p.m. General admission is \$15; students and seniors, \$12; Jazzschool students and children under 12, \$10. Seating is limited and on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations and information: 510-845-5373. Led by guitarist Paul Mehling, the group includes guitarist Dave Ricketts, violinist Bob Thompson, and bassist Ari Munkres, performing fresh interpretations to the unique musical tradition of Gypsy jazz, traditional jazz, swing, tangos, and original compositions.

Israel, Turkey, Near East and other lands each Friday from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., followed by request dances from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. No experience necessary—all ages welcome. Albany YMCA, 901 Kains Ave.; \$4; call 525-1542.

■ **Family Folkdancing** takes place the third Sunday, 1-2:30 p.m. at Ashkenaz Music and Dance Community Center, 1317 San Pablo Ave. Instructor: Denise Schultz Weiss. Bring your feet and a spirit of fun. No experience necessary. An opportunity for families to dance and laugh together. Drop in for good fun and exercise. All ages welcome. Drop-in class, no registration needed. Adults \$3, children \$2. Details: 632-3713.

■ **Swing Dance Classes!** Learn East coast swing and Lindy Hop with Michael and Persephone of Shagtime Dance Instruction, on Mondays at the Work Studio, 2566 Telegraph Ave. Beginning Lindy Hop runs 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. East Coast Swing from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. and beginning Lindy Hop 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays. At The Beat, 2560 Ninth St. Classes run as a monthly series. Details: Michael Marangio at 528-7858.

■ **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** returns to UC Berkeley March 9 through 14, at Zellerbach Hall, 101 Zellerbach Hall. Admission: \$32, \$42 and \$58. Tickets available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at 510-642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.

■ **Berkeley Copwatch** presents the new documentary "The Streets Are Watching" a 50-minute video by independent filmmaker, Jacob Crawford that looks at police accountability through the eyes of three communities; Denver, Cincinnati and Berkeley. The screening is on Tuesday, March 23, at 9:15 p.m. at the Parkway Theatre, 1834 Park Blvd. in Oakland. Admission: \$5. Details: 510-814-2400

■ **Learn easy international folk dances**, fun for all ages at the Albany YMCA, 921 Kains Ave. No experience needed. Wear comfortable shoes and come prepared for a good time. Admission: Adults \$2, kids \$1. Details: 525-1130.

■ **Friday Night Folk Dancing** 8 p.m.-11 p.m.; no partners necessary for line dances taught from Rumania, Bulgaria,

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■ **Seven female playwrights**, seven female directors and about 35 actors (of various persuasions) race the clock to write, rehearse and perform seven brand-new plays within 24 hours at **Women's Will's 24-Hour PlayFest** The final 2 hours on Monday, March 15 (The Ides of March) at 8 p.m. at the Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave. in Berkeley. Enjoy a seat-of-the-pants performance where anything can happen and does. Tickets are \$10-\$25 sliding scale. Details: 510-420-0813

■ **Cafe de la Paz**, 1600 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley, presents two nights of food and wine, dance and music featuring Emmy Award-winner Yaelis and the Caminos Flamencos Company on Saturday and Sunday, March 13 and 14 with performances at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. each night. Tickets, which include a three-course, buffet-style "Nuevo Latino" dinner, are \$42 regular seating or \$55 preferred seating (first and second rows). Reservations: 510-843-0662 www.cafedelapaz.com

■ **YWCA Health and Community Education**; drop in classes in **dance, fitness, yoga, martial arts** and more; University YWCA, 2600 Bancroft Way; 848-6370; \$8 - \$10.

Health

■ **YWCA Health and Community Education**; drop in classes in **dance, fitness, yoga, martial arts** and more; University YWCA, 2600 Bancroft Way; 848-6370; \$8 - \$10.

Learning

■ The Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., a non-profit private social club, offers a **weekly yoga class** for seniors from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturdays. The class taught by Rosie Linsky, who at age 72, has practiced yoga for over 40 years. Open to non-members for \$8 a

class. For more information, call Ray, at 848-7800.

■ **Berkeley Adult School** offers **arts classes** from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesdays at St. John's Center, 2727 College Ave. Classes include materials and firing charges. Lunch is offered at a minimal cost. For more information, call Dan at 525-5497.

■ **St. John's Prime Times** offers a variety of classes: calligraphy, exercise, hand-built ceramics, enameling, wood working, creative writing and art dancing. Speakers on matters of current and travel slide presentations. Members and seniors over 50 ways welcome. Lunch and conversation are offered at a minimal charge. St. John's Presbytery, 2727 College Avenue, Berkeley. 845-6830 for time and schedule.

■ **Beginning Internet** classes place at the El Cerrito Library. The Internet Library at Stockton Ave. Learn the basics of Internet mouse skills, email, web searching, and the library's catalog and databases. Classes are free and charge. Alternate Saturday from 10 to 11 a.m. Call 510-526-3720 to sign up.

■ The Albany Library, 1247 Marine Ave. offers free, ongoing chess instruction, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Lessons range from fundamental advanced topics, and also casual. This program is led by David Puro, who holds the Senior Master title, one of the top chess players in the world. All levels are welcome and chess sets are provided. Call Winkelstein at 510-526-3720 to sign up.

■ **Folkdance classes**, Monday

See CALENDAR, Page

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Calendar

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at St. John's Presbyterian Church, 1727 College Ave. Classes in ceramics, ceramics, copper, woodwork, weaving, cross-stitch and tap dancing (Thursdays) are always well-attended. Members are always welcome. For details, call 869-2547 or 643-7645.

For Independent Living is a newly created Asian program to assist Asian individuals with disabilities, particularly new immigrants. Providing services and advice in Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean. Program staff are culturally sensitive and knowledgeable of community resources available to individuals with disabilities. For more information, call CIL at 510-763-9999.

Circle 8, a Jewish club for seniors, meets 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Oakland Senior Center, 2000 Grand Ave. The club is an active program of the Jewish Community Center. Activities include day trips, Jewish holiday observances, theater outings, entertainment and much more. Call 863-0237 ext. 115 for details.

Learn your speaking skills by attending "Berkeley Communicators" meetings, the first and second meetings each month at 7:15 p.m. at the Berkeley Community Center, 3250 Adeline St. For more information, call 863-0237.

Berkeley Camera Club meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 7:30 p.m. at the Berkeley Community Center, 3250 Adeline St. Share your slides and prints with other photographers at monthly field trips. For more details, call 863-0237.

American Veterans Chapter 100 meets on the third Tuesday of the month from 7:30 p.m. at the Berkeley Community Center, 3250 Adeline St. A short business meeting at 8 p.m. at 1931 Center St., across from the Memorial Building. Price: \$5.00. Members who have had relatives in military are invited to attend and receive a complimentary meal. For more details call 863-0237.

R. DeRiti, Cmdr. D.A.V. Chapter 25, 916-372-8364.

The Berkeley Avatar Metaphysics Toastmasters Club meet on the first and third Thursdays, from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m., at 2515 Hillegas Ave. Public speaking skills and metaphysics come together. For details, call 869-2547 or 643-7645.

The Kensington Senior Activity Center meets on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. The center's community program of life-long learning is presented by the West Contra Costa Adult School. Attend any class or event you choose. Everyone over 55 is welcome. Details: 526-9146 or 547-1969.

Speak Smart! Join Beijing Express Toastmasters. The Smart Club! Meetings take place each Monday, 6:15 to 7:30 p.m. at Peking Express Restaurant, 2068 Center St. For additional information call 549-9671.

Toastmasters: Stand up and say what you mean. Come practice with us. Every Tuesday, Noon to 1 p.m. at 700 Heinz Ave., Berkeley. Call 863-6708 for more information.

The Berkeley Arthritis Support and Education Group meets on the second Tuesday of each month (except December) 1 to 2:30 p.m. in the Matly Auditorium, Herrick Campus, 2001 Dwight Way. For additional information call 204-4503.

Toastmasters on Campus meet the second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m. at the English Language Program Building, 2515 Hillegas. Details: 704-1822.

"Voices of Healing" is a group exploring the psychological and spiritual dimensions of illness and healing. The group meets on the second Friday of each month, 1 to 2:30 p.m. in North Berkeley. Call 528-1235 for more information.

State Health Toastmasters meet every second, third and fourth Tuesday of the month from 12:10 to 1:10 p.m. at the State Health building, 2151 Berkeley Way. Details: 649-7750.

Higher Alignment; 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Mondays; fun, informative seminars creating spiritual partnerships; Feldenkrais

Center, 830 Bancroft Way, Berkeley; 415-461-5337; \$20.

Music

Friday, March 5 is Albany High School's Groove Fest, a student-produced musical extravaganza. The award-winning Albany High School Jazz Band will perform (the band won top honors last year at the Santa Cruz Jazz Festival and from the California Music Educators' Association). Frank Martin, a world-renowned jazz keyboardist and mentor to Albany's budding high school musicians, will also be on the bill along with Albany High R&B group Rhythm Bound. The concert is at 7 p.m. in the Albany High School Little Theater, 603 Kay Route. Tickets: \$10 adults, \$5 students, can be purchased at the door. All proceeds benefit the music program at Albany High.

Down Home Music presents another free in-store performance, featuring acoustic folk/pop and west African palm wine music by Palm Wine Boys on Saturday, March 6, at 2 p.m. Down Home Music is at 10341 San Pablo Ave.

The Albany Community Chorus presents Gabriel Faure's "Requiem" at 7:30 p.m. on March 9 at the Albany United Methodist Church, 980 Stannage Ave. Directed by Anne Hege, the chorus was founded in 2000 and is run through the Albany Adult School. This non-auditioned chorus has performed a wide range of repertoire including excerpts from the Brahms Requiem, Berlioz "The Shepherd's Farewell," Handel's "Messiah," and more modern music including composers Ysaye Barnwell from Sweet Honey in the Rock, Bobby McFerrin, Pauline Oliveros, and others. The performance will be accompanied by Richard Stephens on the organ and Pat Wong playing the harp. Admission is free and there will be a reception following the concert.

Singer/songwriter/activist and con-

summate performer **Holly Near** performs at Berkeley's La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., for one show only on Saturday, March 6, at 8 p.m. \$18 adv. \$20 dr. in Berkeley.

The Snake Trio performs at the Jazz school, 2087 Addison Street in Berkeley, on Saturday, March 6, at 8 p.m. General admission is \$15; students and seniors, \$12. Jazz school students and children under 12, \$10. Seating is limited and on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations and information: 510-845-5373.

Berkeley Chamber Performances presents the **Empyrean Ensemble** and an evening with pianist Amy Dissanayake on Tuesday, March 23, at 8 p.m. at the Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley. The concert is part of "Celebrating Women in Music," a statewide festival in March of orchestras programming works by women composers and engaging women conductors in honor of National Women's History Month. Featured performers on this concert with Dissanayake are Terrie Baune, violin, Thalia Moore, cello, Anna Kruger, viola, and Peter Josheff, clarinet. Tickets are \$20 and will be available at the door, or send a check in the appropriate amount to BCP, 259 Yale Ave., Kensington, CA 94708 (order form available online at www.berkeleychamberperform.org).

On Sunday, March 28, at 4 p.m., the Berkeley Broadway Singers will perform "Pennies From Heaven," a free community singing concert, with old favorites such as "Pennies From Heaven," "Better Than Anything," Cole Porter's "Anything Goes," and '60s oldies. This free concert (donations are appreciated) will be held at St. Augustine's Church, 400 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland. The church is wheelchair accessible. Details: 510-604-5732.

Australia's explosive roots pop band FRUIT LIVE plays at 8 p.m. March 5, at Freight and Salvage 8 p.m. 1111 Ad-



THE 19TH ANNUAL Jewish Music Festival, March 20-27, happens this year primarily in the East Bay, opening Saturday night, March 20 with David Krakauer's Klezmer Madness!, with guest DJ So-Called. The finale, on Saturday, March 27 features Philly Klezmer Swing Dance Party with dance lesson. Performing will be Elaine Hoffman Watts and Susan Watts Hoffman (pictured), daughter and granddaughter of traditional Eastern European Jewish musicians whose family dates back to the 19th century, joined by world-class guest artists and Steven Weintraub, Jewish dance specialist. For tickets and details on performances and venues call 925-866-9599.

son St. in Berkeley For more information, call 510-548-1761 or visit the Web site at www.freightandsalvage.org

The Berkeley Broadway Singers will present their Spring concert, "Pennies From Heaven" on Saturday, March 20,

at 2 p.m., at St. Ambrose Church, 1145 Gilman St., Berkeley. The concert will benefit the church's fund for improved handicapped access and earthquake

See CALENDAR, Page A10

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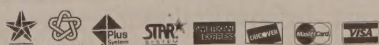
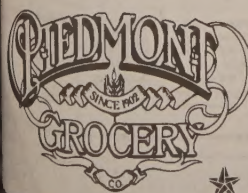
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Calendar

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retrofitting. The program, by the 75 member chorus under the direction of Ellen Hoffman will include the show tunes, jazz and blues. Tickets: \$10 general, \$8 seniors, children free. Call 510.524.7840 for information

■ **"A Little Night Music,"** a benefit for New Spirit Community Church and New Spirit Music Program featuring pasta dinner and a classical music concert takes place Saturday, Feb. 28 with dinner at 6:30 p.m. and music at 8. Pick either event or combine them. Dinner is at the Univ. Christian Church, 2401 LeConte Ave. in Berkeley with the concert across the street at the PSR Chapel, 1798 Scenic Ave. Details: Bob McMillan, 510-704-7729, or e-mail admin@newspiritchurch.org

■ **MusicSources,** 1000 The Alameda at Marin, presents London-based keyboard artist, Susan Alexander-Max with a program of works by Beethoven, Clementi and Wolff at 5 p.m. March 7. A reception and an opportunity to explore MusicSources and its historic instruments will follow the performance. Admission: General: \$18 MS Members, seniors, students: \$15. For reservations, call 510-528-1685.

■ **Performance artist Thoth** performs at 7 p.m. Feb. 28, at the Studio Rasa, 933 Parker St. Berkeley. The event is a benefit to complete the documentary "Gifts of Grief" by Nancy Sobonya. Suggested admission: \$20. Call Ted Seymour at 510-547-5004, for more information.

Outdoors

■ The UC Berkeley Botanical Garden, 200 Centennial Drive, Strawberry Canyon, offers a **free sick plant clinic** on the first Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. to noon. Dr. Raabe will diagnose. Details: 643-2755.

■ **Learn to feed and care for orphaned baby birds:** house sparrows, starlings and pigeons are introduced species that are not afforded care by rehabilitation groups. You can make an important contribution in returning these species to the wild life they deserve to have. Free training and some supplies. Call Myrna 531-3042 or Lelia 655-3911.

■ **East Bay Regional Park Botanical Garden** Tilden Park, presents regular tours, seven days a week. Week days 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, and Sundays 2 p.m. Special tours by appointment. Call 841-8732. For a schedule of upcoming classes call 925-820-1021.

Religion

■ **Kol Hadash,** the Bay area's only Jewish Humanistic Congregation, meets at the Albany Community Center, 1249 Marin Ave., for a regular Shabbat (Sabbath), usually on the fourth Friday of each month, a Family Shabbat every other month on a Saturday, hold Sunday School classes two Sundays a

month, celebrate all the major Jewish holidays, and hold special events from time to time. The group also collects non-perishable food for the needy. Upcoming events: Hadash Brown Bag Family Shabbat with Rabbi Kai Eckstein from noon to 1:30 p.m. Dec. 13. Topic: "King Solomon"; Bring lunch for your family, and (finger) dessert to share; juice provided. Kol Hadash Hanukkah Shabbat/Pot Luck Dinner with Rabbi Kai Eckstein at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 19. Light the first candle of Hanukkah and enjoy the music of the Klezmerians. Call 510-428-1492 or email kolhadash@aol.com for information and pot luck assignments.

Support

■ **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-East Bay Chapter,** sponsors a support group for families of children with mental illness. The next meetings is from 7 to 8:45 p.m. Feb. 17, at Albany United Methodist Church, 980 Stannage St., in Albany. Meetings are free and offers parents and other family members a chance to talk with others. The public is invited. For more information, call NAMI-East Bay at 510-524-1250.

■ **If you have lost someone you love to cancer,** come for gentle guidance through the basic steps of grieving at the **Women's Cancer Resource Center**, 5741 Telegraph Ave. Grief Information Sessions take place from 6-7:30 p.m. Dec. 8, or 6-7:30 p.m. Dec. 22. RSVP 510-420-7900 for more information, or visit www.wcrc.org.

■ **Overeaters Anonymous:** Have a problem with food? Twelve-step support groups dealing with these issues meet at 10:30 a.m. Sundays at Mandana Community Recovery Center, 3989 Howe St. in Oakland (enter on 41st Street Way); 7:30 Wednesdays at Piedmont Community Church, 400 Highland (enter on Mountain, parallel to Highland); 7:30 Thursdays at Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street; and 6 p.m. Fridays at East Bay Church of Religious Science, 4103 Telegraph Avenue. For other meetings or more information, call 510-923-9491.

■ **Alta Bates Support Groups - Arthritis** Support Group meets the second Tuesday of every month; 1 - 2:30 p.m.; 204-4503. Call for additional special events.

■ **Overeaters Anonymous,** a 12-step program providing free aid for those with eating problems, meets in Berkeley every Saturday at 8:30 a.m. (newcomers at 8 a.m.) at St. John's Church, 2727 College Ave. and in Richmond every Thursday at 7 p.m. at Kaiser Hospital, 901 Nevin (take Elevator C to the third floor). For further information, call 273-9292.

■ **TOPS:** 9:30 a.m., Mondays; Take Pounds Off Sensibly, Albany Chapter meets at 980 Stannage St. at Marin; 233-2948 or Karen, 525-6858.

■ **Alta Bates Rehabilitation Center** and East Bay Neurology sponsors a free monthly **stroke support group**. No advance reservations are required, drop-in

anytime. The group meets the first Tuesday of each month from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Maffly Auditorium on Herrick Campus, 2001 Dwight way, Berkeley. Details: 204-4503.

■ **Jewish Family and Children's Services** of the East Bay offers the following community support groups.

— **Divorce Support Group:** Pre-registration required. Wednesday evenings, Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay in Walnut Creek. Call Dr. Carla Haimowitz at 925-927-2000.

— **Bereavement Support Groups:** No Charge. Pre-registration required. Wednesdays, 4:30-6 p.m., JFCS/East Bay in Berkeley, 510-704-7480 ext. 968. Thursdays, 3-4:30 p.m., JFCS/East Bay in Walnut Creek, 925-927-2000 ext. 740.

— **Cancer Support Group:** No charge. Tuesdays from 12:30 - 2 p.m., Markstein Center, room 2810, 2nd floor, 450 30th Street, Oakland. Call 510-869-8833.

— **Support Group for Women 60 Years and Older:** Finally, a special group for older single women. Explore new options for coping with life transitions, making new friendships, dealing with family and peer relationships, and changing old habits. Pre-registration required. Second and fourth Mondays from 3:30-5 p.m. at the Berkeley/Richmond Jewish Community Center. Fee: \$10/session. Call Marti Kutnik LCSW at 510-704-7480 ext. 740.

— **Interfaith Couples Group:** Thursdays, 7:15-9:15 p.m. at Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay in Berkeley. Call Cathy Diamond, MFT at 510-704-7480 ext. 225.

— **Social Skills and Anger Management for Boys:** A special group for 7-9 year old boys expressing anger and other feelings inappropriately, or are having difficulty making and keeping friends. Pre-registration required. Mondays, 4-5:15 p.m. at Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay in Berkeley. Fee: \$40/session. Sliding scale and medical accepted. Call David Edelson, MA, MFT at 510-704-7480 ext. 267.

■ **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-East Bay Chapter** sponsors a support group to provide information and support to families of children and adolescents with mental illness. The next meeting is from 7 to 8 p.m. Feb. 18, at Albany United Methodist Church, 980 Stannage St., in Albany. Support meetings are free and offer parent and other family members a chance to talk with others in order to share information and get emotional support. For details call NAMI-East Bay at 510-524-1250.



THE SNAKE TRIO BRINGS its well-traveled sound to Berkeley's Jazzschool this weekend, featuring Venezuelan cuatro player Jackeline Rago, flutist/saxophonist Donna Viscuso from Connecticut and Mexican bassist Saul Sierra. Check out their unique sound, an international South American traditional music, jazz and more when The Snake Trio performs 8 p.m. at the Jazzschool, 2087 Addison St., Berkeley. Tickets are \$10-\$15. Contact 510-845-5373 or www.jazzschool.com.

■ **Women's Cancer Resource Center** offers support groups throughout the Bay area. If you are interested in attending a group, call the Helpline at 510-420-7900 during the Center's open hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 12 to 4 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays.

■ **Bereavement Support Group** meets Thursdays, 3-4:30 p.m. at Jewish Family and Children's Services in Walnut Creek. Topics include dealing with loneliness, isolation, anger and other unexpected emotions; changing family dynamics; and re-establishing connections with your community. Receive support in a warm, Jewish context. No charge (donations accepted). Pre-registration

required. Call Marti Kutnik LCSW at 925-927-2000 ext. 740. This group is jointly sponsored by Sinai Memorial Chapel and Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay.

Volunteers

■ **Playful and compassionate volunteers** needed to help children living with grief and loss at **Child of Care** (formerly PediatricCare) in Oakland. Volunteers are needed to facilitate support groups for children, teens, toddlers or adults. Training in March. Call Alina at 510-531-7551 or alina@ebac.org.

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In February, a team of award-winning Times photo-journalists converged upon El Cerrito and Kensington to document one day - 24 contiguous hours - in both cities.

Many of these photos are featured in a special section published in the Contra Costa Times on March 6.

For this exhibit, we asked each photographer to select some of his/her favorite shots, whether or not they were printed in the section.

Photographers:

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We invite you to view these stunning photographs at the El Cerrito Community Center through the month of March.

Our thanks to the El Cerrito Community Center for hosting this exhibit.

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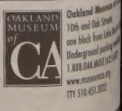
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eat

PAGE A1

seemed to be much more just by the tone of the and the fact that the new I was home," he said. "I was home at six is regular. It just seemed like I was there and then making me to me and then made the

consider the phone call meanor, though it could be a felony if the calls said Police Chief Scott said who added that police La Force about what to

previews controversy is the most hot-button is the city with meetings the issue attracting more residents each.

Residents with home-value views of the Bay are hard for protections of views from encroaching tree proponents have little passionate about trees — which have their

od

PAGE 1

book boxes and nearly 10 "At night, he's a large fan to dry the

we it or not, we were dry things off in this sprague said, referring in the middle of the between glass cases of \$50- baseball cards and racks books. "No one came said 'We're not coming

Dunn, the owner of a shop next door to Dave's was also in his store about the flooding after Mitchell banded floor that morning. Water into Dunn's shop as well, was no other problem soaked carpet, he said.

ell's shop suffered a similar but he felt he was able greater damage. He number mat against his from the inside and used Alhambra water bot down. He grabbed the newspapers and outside, against the other businesses, in to lessen the damage. maintenance workers caused the obstruction drain that caused to collect into the tiny Mitchell estimated the water as high as six inches the sidewalk.

get too much water because I was here in

own financial and environmental benefits — from being cut down or damaged to enhance views. La Force has been an advocate for trees.

The Friends of El Cerrito Trees claims harassment and intimidation against their side is nothing new and in a letter urged the City Council to "stand up to the bullying and vigilantism."

Kirkland said he had not heard of any other threats or harassment reported to police regarding the issue but said he attended a recent council meeting because of concerns over the safety of the large number of people it attracted.

"I think people have to appreciate that there's other opinions and who's to say whose right?" Kirkland said, referring to hecklers at the Feb. 25 council meeting, a few of whom talked over La Force's comments. "Sometimes the courts don't even get it right. One of the things you have to value: as a citizen you have to appreciate other people's opinions."

Reach Alan Lopez at 510-243-3578 or at alopez1@cctimes.com.

advance," he said.

The three business owners praised the building owner, whom they said quickly sent over work crews with vacuums to suck up the water and large fans to dry their carpets.

However, they wished the city would take measures to prevent the flooding again, which they said also occurred in March of 2002.

Albany public works manager Roger Anderman said the city takes pains to prevent flooding, which includes sweeping certain streets during the rainfall to keep debris from entering and clogging the storm drain system.

But beyond that, it's sometimes difficult to escape as heavy rains can overwhelm the city's flood control system, and expensive upgrades are way above anything the city could afford.

In a public works press release, he acknowledged that after heavy rains, residents complain about the same flooding problems occurring, but that it's a "long Albany tradition" for people to control flooding around their property by using sandbags, which are available at any time in the parking lot of the Albany Teen Center at 900 Buchanan Street.

"In a way it's like earthquakes," Anderman said. "They happen." "You try to prevent buildings from falling down, you do mitigations to protect property, but they do happen."

Reach Alan Lopez at 510-243-3578 or alopez1@cctimes.com.

Backing

FROM PAGE A1

an expenditure plan," Maxwell said. "Assuming we get that, the (Contra Costa) County Board of Supervisors has to approve everything before it goes on the ballot in November."

Measure C has funded a number of transportation projects in the county and more are in the works, according to a color booklet issued by the authority with the title: "Measure C: An investment that's paid off."

After the meeting three City Council members said the measure has benefited El Cerrito by annually providing \$300,000 a year for street repair and between \$60,000 and \$80,000 for transit services for the elderly.

Transit services for the elderly is a key benefit for the county and El Cerrito, said Councilwoman Janet Abelson and Mayor Pro Tem Sandi Potter.

"Over the next 20, 30 years, the percentage of the population in that category is going to greatly increase as baby boomers age," said Abelson, who sits on the 11-member Contra Costa Transportation Authority Board, which will oversee the crafting of the measure. "We're going to have the need to increase those services."

Abelson, Potter and Councilman Mark Friedman said they're generally in favor of extending the measure to 2029 and want to see it crafted so it prioritizes public transit.

"We have the most congested freeway in the whole Bay Area, I think — for the last five or six years that's been true," said Abelson, of Interstate 80. "We've got to find other solutions and I see that in public transit, buses and BART."

They also want to continue the \$300,000 that is allocated annually for city street repair.

"You've got that percentage going to streets and roads and I think we've used that well in El Cerrito," said Friedman.

Eighteen percent of the tax is allocated to cities, towns and the county in exchange for participation in a citywide growth management plan.

Measure C money is also earmarked to fund a controversial \$6.7 million a BART parking garage proposed on the southeast corner of El Cerrito Plaza.

Countywide, Measure C improvements have included a number of freeway and "corridor" projects; a BART extension to north Concord; and regional bicycle and pedestrian trail improvements. It also funds a program to promote non-solo driving; and provides \$30 million for transit for senior citizens and those with disabilities.

In West County, Measure C funded the 7.3-mile Richmond Parkway from Interstate 580 near the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to Interstate 80 near the Hilltop Shopping Center.

A key issue in crafting the tax extension will be how to divvy up the money between large transportation projects such as freeway improvements, versus transit programs, such as buses for the elderly and disabled, Maxwell said.

Four public meetings regarding the re-authorization have been held in the last month and a Monday, March 8, deadline has been set for comments about the current Measure C expenditure plan alternatives or its environmental review, said Maxwell. He's also expecting a letter from El Cerrito leaders regarding their concerns and comments.

"We have gone through a pretty elaborate exercise to try to engage the public," Maxwell said.

"This was a courtesy to go to the council to tell them what we're doing and give them a chance to ask questions and formerly form comments they might have, that we could consider as we formulate the plan."

Reach Alan Lopez at 510-243-3578 or at alopez1@cctimes.com.

Schools

FROM PAGE A1

textbook purchases and recruitment of aides and counselors.

Although Measure J failed, the passage of state Propositions 57 and 58 decreased the district's \$22 million worst-case budget shortfall to \$16.3 million.

Measure J supporters said the parcel tax was the only way to raise sufficient money to protect key programs from budget cuts. Opponents countered that district officials brought the budget problem upon themselves and cannot be trusted with more taxpayer dollars.

"In my opinion, 37 percent of the community was able to say that it wasn't the right time to call for their support. They're not willing to provide supplemental support for losses that the state has taken away," Ramsey said.

As for trying another parcel tax, Ramsey said that is something he is willing to talk about.

Kevin Rivard, a parent who opposed the measure said Tuesday night he would not celebrate if the measure failed.

"The kids need the money and the schools need the money. It's a lose-lose situation."

Terri Jackson, president of United Teachers of Richmond said the measure's failure may mean cuts in critical programs, such as the kindergarten through third-grade program and the counseling program. Both are on the budget reduction list.

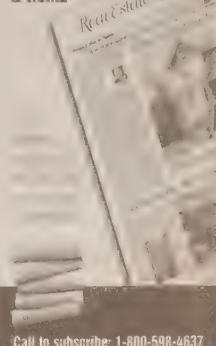
Jackson said she was disap-

pointed the measure didn't pass, especially since she said it came so close. Jackson said she was planning to speak at the board's Wednesday meeting about the district's future.

"I think we're coming to a crossroads where we really have to think about the quality of education that we can provide for our students in this district," Jackson said.

The school board is expected to act on the proposed cuts at its 6:30 p.m. meeting Monday at the Lovonya DeJean Middle School, 3400 Macdonald Ave., Richmond.

Ana Facio Contreras can be reached at 510-262-2798 or acontreras@cctimes.com

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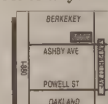
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Kaiser augments West County care

■ About 50 percent more beds will be available at Richmond hospital, and it will lease a medical office building in Pinole

By Judy Silber
STAFF WRITER

Anticipating a membership surge in West Contra Costa County, Kaiser Permanente will increase its presence in Richmond and Pinole.

The Oakland-based HMO will increase the number of beds and operating rooms at the Kaiser Richmond Medical Center by about 50 percent. It will also lease a new medical office building in Pinole and build a parking lot for the Richmond facility. Kaiser said the new facilities will be completed by the end of 2006 at a total cost of \$50 million.

"It's an important area for us," said Mary Ann Thode, president of Kaiser Permanente, Northern California Region. "Even with the poor economy, it's experienced significant growth."

The expansion is a sharp turnaround from seven years ago when the HMO closed much of the Richmond facility for a lack of patients. The hospital reopened services in 1999, and Kaiser membership continued to grow. Now Thode projects membership in the Richmond and Pinole areas will increase by about 14 percent over the next 10 years.

The new construction is long overdue, said Wanda Jones, president of the New Century Healthcare Institute in San Francisco, a health care research firm. Kaiser hasn't kept pace with its membership in West County, she said. "The surprise would be if Kaiser weren't growing."

The Richmond medical center is currently operating close to capacity, admitted Sherie Hickman, director of hospital operations at Kaiser Richmond Medical Center. The hospital isn't

turning away patients, but the additional 22 beds and three operating rooms will help ensure that it can meet demand, she said.

The expansion also means West County patients can receive more hospital care at Kaiser Richmond. The hospital intends to add pediatric and orthopedic surgery so that patients won't have to drive to Kaiser Oakland Medical Center.

The Pinole medical office building will close a geographic gap for residents of Pinole and Hercules who must now choose between Kaiser's Martinez, Vallejo or Richmond facilities. Forty primary care doctors and nurse practitioners will occupy the building, which the City of Pinole is developing for Kaiser to lease, Hickman said. The facility will offer care in internal medicine, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, laboratory and radiology services and a pharmacy.

The West County construction is part of a \$10 billion bill to expand and upgrade hospitals in Northern California over the next 10 years.

Reach Judy Silber at 925-977-8507 or jsilber@cctimes.com.

Plaza

FROM PAGE A1

Parking for residents living there would be placed on the first floor of the housing structure. Both structures reach up to five stories high.

More than 20 residents spoke about the project at a Feb. 24 meeting designed to collect public input for what environmental effects should be studied. Residents said they had concerns about the development's impact on pollution, traffic, parking and safety in the area.

Speakers included Michael Gardner, a member of Plaza Neighbors, a loose-knit group of Albany and El Cerrito residents that formed to increase awareness of the project and have input on it.

"Everybody involved is concerned about the way (the development) is structured now," said Gardner, after the meeting. "We prefer to have it scaled down to match the area and mitigate potential problems we see and not to bring BART traffic in that is not local. To bring BART traffic to the Plaza is completely insane to us, we don't see the point to it."

The parking structure and housing development would be built by two separate development entities — Forest Plaza Partners LLC, comprised primarily of Palo Alto-based developer Bill Garlock and a group of Bay Area-based investors called El Cerrito Land Partners, also headed by Garlock.

The garage would be maintained and operated by Forest Plaza for up to 25 years, said El Cerrito community development director Jill Keimach. The city would eventually buy the \$6.7 million garage from Garlock with money it expects to receive from a 16-year-old Contra Costa County sales tax measure.

Garlock believes the garage and housing development will continue to improve El Cerrito Plaza, which is now bustling with shoppers after lying nearly dormant for much of the 1990s.

"Everybody has an opinion," Garlock said. "Is the center better off now than it was 10 years ago? Is the area better off now than it was 20 years ago? I think we're moving in a positive direction. I don't think you'll find many people who liked the center before the current developers took over. I think it's a nice place."

Several people who attended the recent meeting disagreed, calling the Plaza too vehicle-oriented, "miserable to walk in," and wanted to see it improved.

"I wish the Plaza had been designed better for pedestrians to inhabit because it's really, really poor," said El Cerrito resident Rita Minjares, perhaps the only resident who said she was in favor of the housing/garage proposal. "I think it would make this project with the garage and mixed-use development much, much easier to endorse wholeheartedly."

Bob Blaisdell, a toxicologist with the California Environmental Agency, urged the city to re-

frain from pursuing the project or scale it down, because the pollution from the increased traffic will exacerbate asthma problems.

"The traffic situation in Albany, San Pablo (Avenue), Central (Avenue) is already very bad," Blaisdell said. "You're about to make a bad situation worse."

Other residents questioned or criticized the new Plaza proposal without necessarily criticizing the Plaza itself.

Albany community development director Ann Chaney questioned the traffic analysis that said only 15 percent of the vehicle trips would come through the Albany streets leading most directly to the development from Brighton Avenue.

"They're going to take the quickest route with the least obstructions," Chaney said after the meeting of the residents living at the proposed condominiums. "And the other location from San Pablo (Avenue) ... when shops are open, you'll be going through and competing with commercial users. So it seems as though the 15 percent coming from Brighton (Avenue) is low to me."

Chaney added that the environmental review should consider studying the development without the use of the Albany streets. Her city could explore the option of closing those streets off to the Plaza, she said.

Others said residents living in the condominiums would park on Albany side streets because the parking underneath the housing provided only one stall per unit. They were also concerned

about safety for pedestrians wanted to know how perfect Albany Middle School would be affected about two blocks away.

The city stands to lose \$60,000 for half the project's environmental study, conducted by consulting firms, Keimach said. Garlock said the study would be under state law.

EIP Associates said at last meeting and will consider the study a document that will be used for environmental mitigation, Keimach said. Garlock said the study would be under state law.

Keimach and Chaney said the EIR will be completed before decisions about whether the project be pursued.

"I think the city is it's too early to tell don't have any of the mental impacts or affect the city as a whole said."

Reach Alan Lopez at 510-243-3578 or at alopez1@cctimes.com.

Walk

FROM PAGE A1

has worked with children — through the YMCA, recreation departments and school districts — for much of his adult life, except for several years when he was a travel agent. He's currently

vice chairman of the city's arts and culture commission, and he and his wife are members of the El Cerrito Art Association.

He said he's had ambitions to run for City Council for 10 years and is planning to do that this year. That's jumping ahead, though.

"This walk is about learning

about the city and making tribute to the city," Daystar said. "That no matter what happens, I know I've seen the city up close myself."

Reach Alan Lopez at 510-243-3578 or at alopez1@cctimes.com.

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300 - 29th Avenue, Oakland (510) 261-1621

Good food, friendly service, and comfortable atmosphere describe Pier 29 Waterfront Restaurant. For over 30 years the restaurant has been located adjacent to the Park Street Bridge overlooking the Alameda/Oakland estuary. The "Pier" offers an extensive menu featuring fresh seafood, angus New York steak, prime rib, pasta, teriyaki ribs, daily specials, and much more. The theme in the kitchen is "good homestyle cooking." Brunch is served on weekends from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., and the popular earlybird menu is featured daily. Every table has a view of the water and there is plenty of free parking. The Pier is open 7 days a week, Mon. - Fri. 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. Bar Hours: Mon. - Thu. 11 a.m. - 11 p.m., Fri. - Sat.

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Real Estate & Home

Real Estate & Home is a supplement to The Berkeley Voice, The Journal, The Montclairian, The Piedmonter

Friday, March 5, 2004

Section B

Selling prices can be the tricky part

Even in a series of true experiences in real estate, it's quite a few years now, people are buying a house in this area. And it seems to be the number of bidders, and the selling prices are higher than before.

Agents know there will be a lot of bidders on their listings? Do they really underprice them? It may seem so, in the major cases, it just isn't true. Agents, assure you, are as shocked, believing and astounded by what everyone else is.

Agents usually do know which are likely to elicit the most interest. Good sturdy houses, ones that are located where people want to live, especially when there are no other simple ways for sale will attract a lot of interest.

Also, relatively inexpensive homes, even though in poor condition, may be because they are of interest to many buyers. An asking price is suggested to a seller, good agents do research. Anet and I begin by looking at past sales, thinking about what new listing means in size, condition, location, desirability. We think and about an appropriate price for the property.

Who is the likely buyer? What does he want to buy and to live? What work will he need to do after he owns the house? Also, importantly, what price will he accept for the house? There are no guarantees.

Even in this insane market, what if the offer made is at or close to the asking price? Will the seller sell?

If the house, for example, looks like it's worth \$550,000, but the owner says he won't take a penny less than \$600,000, it must be listed at the higher price. It's just no good to have a disappointed seller saying, "I thought it would go much higher. I want to raise the price."

If the owner sets his asking price and he's wrong, if the house doesn't sell, he's got his answer. It wasn't worth that amount of money to buyers. The seller can lower the price or he can take the house off the market.

But what if he had listed at \$550,000? Would he have sold for \$600,000 — or more? That's the tricky part, the unknown, unknowable.

There is only one chance at being a brand new offering. Just one.

Raising a price or taking a rest from marketing doesn't mean the property will never sell, but there is tremendous impact that goes along with that first time availability. It's a new product, not offered before, and buyers respond to this. They come and they see, they size up their competition as best they are able, and they offer to buy.

The result, in a large number of cases in recent years, is that buyers accept properties entirely in their present condition ("as is"), the owner receives all cash and a price higher — often considerably higher — than he was asking.

There are many stunning examples of this. Anet's and my first listing of this year was a triplex in Rockridge.

We looked in vain for true com-



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parable sales for the property. We thought about likely buyers, people who would live in the property, in one or more of the apartments, and also investors.

It seemed unlikely to us that an investor would be the buyer because market rents would not cover the expenses. But for someone wanting to live in Rockridge, someone who could not afford to buy a detached home, this property would make sense.

We priced the triplex at \$750,000 because we'd figured out that a buyer able to buy a house for \$400,000 could buy these apartments and he could live in one of them for less than a \$400,000 house would cost him.

We were very surprised by the response. We had requests from 47 potential buyers for disclosure packages describing the condition and history of the property. Of those, 13 people wrote offers, and half of them were investors. The other half, including the winner, intended to live there.

The property sold for \$925,000. That's almost 25% over asking price! There was nothing in past sales to indicate that this property would sell for so much, nothing to suggest that we should have listed it higher.

And yet, perhaps because so

Real Estate Spotlight:

Elegant yet modern home in Oakland



CONSTRUCTED CIRCA 1924 AND SITED ON ONE-THIRD OF AN ACRE, this stunning traditional home at 1129 Clarendon Crescent, Oakland, offers serene elegance and modern conveniences for today's busy families.

An old specimen magnolia tree and professionally landscaped gardens adorn the entrance to the home. Once inside, you will feel the house unfold to spacious formal rooms, including a light-filled living room and gorgeous formal dining room. Enjoy afternoon tea in the sunroom off the updated kitchen, or walk out to the magnificent deck and down to the exceptionally large and fully landscaped garden. There is even some hardscape for a little basketball practice.

The second floor offers four wonderful bedrooms including a master suite with an adjacent office and a fireplace. On the lower level is a fifth bedroom, loads of storage and a marvelous family room, complete with extremely useful built-ins.

Price: \$1,195,000. This home is open March 7, 2 - 4:30

Listing agent: Anian Pettit Tunney, The Grubb Co., 510-339-0404, ext. 217.

many people find Rockridge so desirable, maybe because inventory was so low and there was nothing available like it, it sold for a tremendous premium.

What if we had offered it for sale for \$925,000? What would have happened? We'll never know the

answer to that. We do know that there was no data on which to base such an asking price.

But now that our listing has sold, the data for similar buildings does exist. A new level has been reached.

Where can it possibly go from

here? That's what agents are asking one another. They've been asking the same question for a long while now.

Pat Talbert and Anet Tarpo are residential real estate agents who can be reached at 510-653-2050 and at www.tarpoandtalbert.com.

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BY APPOINTMENT

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Oakland \$1,800,000
Spectacular View, 3 BR 3.5 BA Elegant home with unobstructed 3 bridge view. Marble jacuzzi in master bath. Unobstructed quality finishes throughout!
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Orinda \$879,950
3 BR 2.5 BA Great location & desirable floor plan. Remodeled kitchen/baths, lights, HWF plus pantry! 2-car garage & storage! Won't last!
George Karsant 510.339.4700

Rockridge \$840,000
3 BR 2.5 BA Rockridge contemporary, formal dining, remodeled kitchen, family room opens to private yard, Bay views from master suite.
Dane Hymer 510.339.4700

Oakland Hills \$775,000
3 BR 2.5 BA. Living in design, great Bay views, level outdoor living area. Formal LR & DR, oversized FR & updated kitchen.
David Echert 510.339.4700

East Lake/New Chinatown \$498,000
3 BR 2 BA VACANT! Remodeled, light, bright Edwardian duplex. HWF, lndr, wood, 2 blocks from Lac. Great for residence, extended family, or rental.
Elana Stone 510.339.4700

Berkeley (South) \$479,000
3 BR 4 BA Great income producing property. (4) 1 BR, 1 BA units. Annual income approx. \$25,248, please do not disturb tenants. Call Gary/Noni.
Noni Robinson 510.339.4700

Montclair \$469,000
Home plus character mark this circa 30's 3 BR 2 BA Whimsical medieval revival style. Formal Dining room, HWF, level yrd, near College Ave.
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BY APPOINTMENT

Laurel \$419,000
2 BR 1 BA Darling 1923 California Bungalow; 2 bedrooms plus office, 1 bath, HWF, & gorgeous kitchen. Lovely level bkyrd, workshop too!
Nader Davari 510.339.4700

Fruitvale \$379,000
3 BR 1 BA Large house on big lot! Park-like backyard, 6th basement, many custom features: Hwd flrs, deck. Must see this one!
Terry Anthony 510.339.4700

Oakmore \$2,000,000
2201 Bywood Dr
4 BR 4.5 BA Fabulous estate built in 1935. Sweeping views & beautiful grounds. Wonderful details.
Terry Kulha 510.339.4700

Claremont Hills \$2,350,000
20 Stephens Way
4+BR 3.5BA Gorgeous! New construction, contemporary design. Fabulous Bay views, large lot.
Lydia Nayo 510.339.4700

Oakland Hills \$1,780,000
5 Diablo Dr
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Claremont \$1,650,000
49 Vicente Pl
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Crocker Highlands \$599,000
4264 Lakeshore Av
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Charming 2-story cape cod, updated Kit, Formal DR w/French drs to lovely landscaped yrd.
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388 Fairmont Avenue
Sun 1 - 5
3 BR 1.5 BA Grand Ole Dame built in 1907. High ceilings, w/d flrs, country kit & huge unfinished Attic.
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Oakland \$499,000
153 Thousand Oaks St
Sun 2 - 4:30
3 BR 2.5 BA Beautiful & serene, sweeping City/Bay vus, end unit, updated Kit, Family rm, yrd & garage.
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El Cerrito \$499,000
15 Ramona
Sun 2 - 5
2 BR 1 BA Home in excellent location near Fat Apple's, Colusa Cir, Solano shops. Bright kitchen.
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Fruitvale \$489,000
2743 26th Avenue
Sun 1 - 4:30
5 BR 1 BA Unique Fruitvale Duplex: plus (2) 1BR cottages, 4 garage spaces, set up off street. Nice!
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Oakland \$439,000
4526 Pampas Av
Sun 1 - 4:30
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Berkeley \$399,000
1331 Kains St.
Sun 1 - 4
Sweet, sunny bungalow opens to wonderful garden. Great neighborhood! 2/1 plus 1-car garage.
Sally Hendrickson 510.486.1495

Laurel \$389,000
3686 Madrone
Sun 2 - 4:30
2 BR 2 BA Great starter home, nice sized kitchen w/eat-in nook, large sunny backyard & a basement.
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OPEN HOUSES

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Berkeley \$429,000
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Sun 1 - 4
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Gregg Lustig 510.486.1495

El Cerrito \$405,000
804 Elm St.
Sun 2 - 5
2 BR 1 BA Newly landscaped. Hardwood floors & original details. Great neighborhood. Come see!
Laura Arechiga 510.486.1495

Oakland \$399,950
2818 Best Av
Sun 2 - 4:30
3 BR 1 BA New Price! Spacious layout, Formal DR, extra LR, eat in kitchen. HWF, FP, front/back yrd.
Reva Tolbert 510.339.4700

El Cerrito \$405,000
804 Elm St.
Sun 2 - 5
2 BR 1 BA Newly landscaped. Hardwood floors & original details. Great neighborhood. Come see!
Laura Arechiga 510.486.1495

Oakland \$399,950
2818 Best Av
Sun 2 - 4:30
3 BR 1 BA New Price! Spacious layout, Formal DR, extra LR, eat in kitchen. HWF, FP, front/back yrd.
Reva Tolbert 510.339.4700

Berkeley \$399,000
1331 Kains St.
Sun 1 - 4
Sweet, sunny bungalow opens to wonderful garden. Great neighborhood! 2/1 plus 1-car garage.
Sally Hendrickson 510.486.1495

Laurel \$389,000
3686 Madrone
Sun 2 - 4:30
2 BR 2 BA Great starter home, nice sized kitchen w/eat-in nook, large sunny backyard & a basement.
Becky Andersen 510.339.4700

OPEN HOUSES

Allendale Park \$365,000
3834 Brookdale Avenue
Sun 2 - 4:30
Charming 3+ BR, 2 BA, warm HWF fireplace in LR, formal DR w/built-ins, updated bath.
Noni Robinson 510.339.4700

Oakland \$330,000
53 Anair Way
Sun 1 - 4:30
3 BR 2.5 BA Best kept secret w/spectacular views! End unit, gated community, FR, patio and garage.
Dan Joy 510.339.4700

Dimond District \$217,000
2901 Mac Arther Blvd
Sun 2 - 4:30
2 BR 1 BA Charming Diamond District condominium near many activity and shopping options.
Jeffrey Needleman 510.339.4700

Oakland Hills \$450,000
3 lots for sale adjacent to this one. Seller will sell together or separately 1.7 million for all 4.
David Echert 510.339.4700

Piedmont Pines \$299,000
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Burn lot with great frontage, one of a few left. Priced to sell!
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David Echert 510.339.4700

Redwood Heights \$199,000
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Fourth quarter home prices, sales up

■ 2003 median price rises 17.9 percent in fourth quarter, sales up 12.1 percent compared to same period in 2002

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

The median price of an existing, single-family detached home in California hit a new record during the fourth quarter of 2003, rising 17.9 percent to \$391,680, the California Association of Realtors (C.A.R.) reported today. For the year as a whole, the median price of an existing, single-family detached home was a new annual record at \$372,720, a 17.9 percent increase compared to 2002.

Closed escrow sales of existing, single-family detached homes in California amounted to 633,650 for the fourth quarter of 2003 at a seasonally adjusted annualized rate, a 12.1 percent increase from 565,050 in the fourth quarter of 2002. Sales for all of 2003 increased 5.1 percent to 601,770 compared to 2002, when sales were 572,550.

"Sales in the fourth quarter were unseasonably strong this year," said C.A.R. Vice President and Chief Economist Leslie Appleton-Young. "It's a testament to the role lower interest rates played in the real estate market, and the expectation that they will rise in 2004."

"The median price of a home also surged in the fourth quarter, reaching record highs in every re-

gion in the state," she said.

C.A.R.'s Unsold Inventory Index for existing, single-family detached homes for the fourth quarter of 2003 was 1.98 months, compared to a revised 2.5 months for the same period a year ago. The index indicates the number of months needed to deplete the supply of homes on the market at the current sales rate.

Thirty-year fixed mortgage interest rates averaged 5.92 percent during the fourth quarter of 2003, down from 6.07 percent in the fourth quarter of 2002, according to the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. Adjustable mortgage interest rates averaged 3.75 percent in the fourth quarter of 2003, down from 4.18 percent in the fourth quarter of 2002.

The median number of days it took to sell a single-family home was 27 days in the fourth quarter of 2003, compared to a revised 27 days for the same period a year ago.

In a separate report covering more localized statistics generated by C.A.R. and DataQuick Information Systems, 96 percent or 432 of 450 cities and communities showed an increase in their respective median home prices in the fourth quarter of 2003 compared to a year ago. DataQuick statistics are based on county records data rather than MLS information.

Large changes in local median home prices typically indicate both local home price appreciation, and often, large shifts in the composi-

tion of housing market activity. Some of the variations in median home prices may be exaggerated due to compositional changes in housing demand.

The California Association of Realtors (www.car.org) is one of the largest state trade organizations in the United States, with more than 115,000 members dedicated to the advancement of professionalism in real estate. C.A.R. is headquartered in Los Angeles.

HIGHEST MEDIAN PRICES

Laguna Beach, \$1,060,000
Malibu, \$1,060,000
Palos Verdes Estates, \$1,015,000
Manhattan Beach, \$1,014,500
Beverly Hills, \$1,005,000
Burlingame, \$938,000
Del Mar, \$920,000
Saratoga, \$905,000
Carmel, \$890,000

GREATEST MEDIAN PRICE INCREASES

Westlake Village, 58.8 percent
Sierra Madre, 56.7 percent
Fairfax, 49.3 percent
Sanger, 45 percent
Highland, 42.2 percent
Hermosa Beach, 40.4 percent
El Segundo, 37.8 percent
Perris, 37.5 percent
Desert Hot Springs, 35.9 percent
Reedley, 35.3 percent

Real Estate Focus:

Cabin nestled in woods near Wildcat Canyon



A SECLUDED CABIN IN A BEAUTIFUL WOODED AREA, the home at 5944 Park Avenue is nestled among oaks and fragrant coastal bay trees. This charming two-bedroom home has a variety of indoor and outdoor living spaces. The main home has an open floor plan.

The kitchen, dining area and living room space has vaulted ceilings with sky lights, a wood stove, tile and wood floors and French doors that lead to a front deck. Downstairs is the bedroom, bathroom, and a separate entrance. Across the street is a small detached office with a skylight and wooded view.

The large double lot has a second detached deck and patio area for outdoor seating, a shed/garage, and plenty of space for gardening. The property is directly across from Wildcat Regional Park in the Richmond View area, just minutes to freeway access and shopping. Price: \$390,000. Open home Sunday, March 21, 2 - 4 p.m.

Listing agent: Carol Heath-Kim at Prudential Real Estate, 510-525-2346.

Is former bee problem a problem?

Q: I recently bought a house in Georgia. After moving in, some of the neighbors asked me if I knew about the bee hive problem with the house. Apparently, bees had made a enormous bee hive in one of the walls and it required intensive work. As I understand, even the EPA got involved. I was never told of this by the sellers' real estate agent nor the disclosure form. The real estate agent had a power of attorney from the seller.

Can I get any compensation from the seller and the real estate agent (since she actually sold me the house) for hiding this fact?

—J. Mejia

A: It sounds from the language used in your story that the bee problem is a historical problem that no longer exists.

As with any issue that has been fixed to an acceptable and reasonable state with no real reason to believe it will resurface, you are not encumbered with any loss in value or utility.

The seller and the seller's agent didn't hide anything if it did not exist at the time the property was sold. However, if the problem still exists and the seller knew of the problem and purposely withheld that information, depending on your purchase agreement, you may have a legal remedy available to you.

Q: I'm thinking of refinancing and would like to know if a home equity loan would be better and more cost-efficient than a mortgage. My current mortgage is for \$75,000 at 6.875 percent for 10 more years. A home equity would be for the same amount at 4.99 percent for seven years.

Without writing out your answer, I have a comment... Instead of this person getting a home equity loan for the \$75,000 with the costs involved in getting the lower 4.99 percent loan, why wouldn't you recommend that they just add \$200 more to their current monthly loan payment?

Given that they would be paying the \$1,000-plus on the 4.99 percent loan they certainly could afford it and would be bypassing any additional fees/costs to them. Since the difference between the 6.875 and the 4.99 percent loans is less than 2 percent, I would hardly think this would be feasible to refinance and really save any substantial amount of money to offset the costs involved. Just a thought...

—Norm R

A: Your answer is just one of many that might solve this problem; however, as in my original answer, we don't know the true cost of borrowing without knowing the closing costs of the home equity loan.

By paying the additional \$200 per month on the existing loan, they will pay off the existing loan in 91 months — seven months into the eighth year. In raw dollars, that would be nearly \$7,800 more in total payments. Again, to correctly analyze this situation, we would need all of the relevant facts to accurately assess the situation.

Q: I have an acre of land in a California gated community that I wish to sell. I know it will be easy to sell because it is in an excellent location and in the past I have received letters from private parties asking me to sell it. I was told by a friend that it is probably best to hire a real estate person instead of trying to sell it myself.

I don't know how much it is worth. I would like to find an agent who will accept 3 percent commission. I am in no special hurry to sell and believe it will be very easy to make a sale. How can I locate an agent to price and sell the land?

A: Let's say, for simplicity, the acre of land is worth \$500,000. If you are willing to pay a 3 percent commission, that would mean you are willing to pay a \$15,000 fee for someone to help you sell something that, apparently, other people want to buy from you now (the unsolicited letters).

Furthermore, it would appear that you have a valuable asset. As such, it might be best to obtain an appraisal and use that as your basis for setting a minimum price for the property. An appraisal on such a parcel would be substantially less than \$15,000 — probably closer to \$1,500.

You should be able to find someone to act as your agent in this matter for much less than the 3 percent you are willing to pay since you have leads for them to follow (the letters) and a market-based appraisal to aid in setting a price.

Besides, with this column reaching many parts of California as well as other affluent areas of this country, there may be quite a few more new inquiries regarding your desire to sell. I'd get that appraisal ASAP just to know how much it is worth!

Q: My husband and I are 53 and



TOM HAMILTON
Real Estate Q&A

hope to spend the winters in the Escondido Beach/Fort Meyers, Fla., area in three to five years. Our home is paid for but with the interest rates down is it wise to purchase something now and use it for rental until we are ready (to build some equity), or to wait the three to five years?

We are not wealthy people but are both working. I am afraid that real estate prices and interest rates in that area will go up too much for us to afford at a later time. What would you advise?

—Patti Gillespie, Highland, Ind.

A: In that area of Florida, I would agree with you that prices will continue to rise, and with interest rates so low, there is a greater probability that they will rise as our economy grows over the next few years.

Taken together, it might be a good idea to buy something there now as a means to protect your purchasing power in the area. In five years, prices will probably be

See HAMILTON, Page B3

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move in opposite directions.

Even if you do not like to take a lot of risk with your money, you should have at least a small portion of your portfolio in stocks or other equity investments. Likewise, the most aggressive investors can still benefit from having some bond holdings in their portfolio.

Broaden your focus. Once you have your assets divided, keep in mind that they are all working together for your desired end result. The performance of each individual investment will likely draw your attention one way or the other.

But you need to remember that your focus really needs to be on the sum of the parts. Never concentrate on one element of your holdings so much that you lose track of your portfolio's overall performance. Taking a total portfolio perspective will help you identify and make any necessary adjustments.

Maintain a good balance. After deciding on specific percentages to allocate to different investment types, make sure to stick to these guidelines by rebalancing your portfolio at the end of each year. By maintaining proper allocations, you will actually force yourself to buy when the market is declining, and

pare back a little when charges ahead — just nature may tell you to opposite. Adhering to standards will help you balance in your portfolio.

Make your money work. In the long run, two of the need to worry about inflation and taxes. If the your investments are enough to outpace both you will not be making any

Along those same are spending too much other areas of your life will not matter how much in your portfolio. Expected credit card payments, high interest debt, earnings in a hurry. Pay — or even paying off —

See GOUGH Page

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Inspection coming? Tips to increase your home's appraised value

BY NAPOLEON FORTE
GENERAL APPRAISAL SERVICES
 Every homeowner knows they have some control over the appraised value of their home. It's true. It's not just when the appraiser visits your home. It's just one step beyond curb appeal. Here's how.

- Paint areas that are most used such as kitchens bedrooms, and bathrooms.
- List all new items installed within the last year, such as new appliances, new air conditioning, hot water furnaces or carpeting, tile flooring or new lighting.
- Be at home to guide the appraiser thru your home to point out all important features of your home. You know your home better than anyone else.
- Add new landscaping when cost is reasonable or just spruce up what you already have by pruning, cutting grass, and general lawn clean-up.
- Clean your house as good as you can. Nothing beats a good gen-

eral house cleaning.

- Repair all visible concrete cracks or broken windows.
- Make sure all areas are accessible to the appraiser. The more the appraiser sees the more value.

Once the appraiser's inspection is over, properties sold within your neighborhood will be compared with yours to come up with your value. And if all the tips above are followed, you are well on your way to getting the highest appraised value. For more information on home values and appraising, call 800-497-3488.

Napoleon Forte, ASA, Chief Appraiser, is a State licensed Certified General Appraiser with Certified General Appraisal Services.

Prepare for tax increase after home buy

BY MARSHALL LOEB AND BRIAN JANUARY
CBS MARKETWATCH

When buying a home or planning to improve one should consider the increase in property tax. It can be a painful surprise. Homebuyers can check past assessments, they should know that a house will be reassessed, that can mean a hefty increase in real estate market.

will owe, check local taxes for comparable properties that have sold recently. They should be available in your township or county assessor's office. Also check to see how regularly the house was reassessed.

If it has been several years since the last assessment, that can mean a large increase.

Also beware of remodeling or additions that can raise your property value and the taxes you will owe. If any change requires paperwork to be filed with the local

government, plan for a higher tax bill. Dramatic changes, such as adding rooms or remodeling a kitchen, may bring a visit from the assessor.

Are you paying far more than similar houses in your neighborhood? Property tax levels can be appealed, though the process varies depending on the jurisdiction. A good place to start is to contact your local assessment office to determine the appeal process and learn about appeal deadlines.

You haven't planned your estate? What are you waiting for?

BY DAVID LEVIN
SHENEHON CENTER

One of a three-part series on what's in a title?

It's not just a title, quite a lot. Deciding your property will be titled or not, whether in joint tenancy, tenancy in common, community property (CP) or community property with right of survivorship (CPRS) can have significant consequences for estate planning. If it's true, for example, that you are placed in joint tenancy or CPRS will avoid probate on the first spouse, the surviving spouse then needs to (but is not to) make a plan to avoid probate on his or her own death. If married couples can't agree on CPRS, all adults can agree as joint tenants or tenants in common.

Joint Tenancy in Real Property also has significant, negative consequences for the surviving tenant regarding capital gains when he or she wants to later sell the property.

Another important title issue is the consequence of directly changing the status of the estate, consider the married individual who receives a large inheritance (separate property), al-

lows it to get mixed up with his other property (becomes, at least largely, community property) then gets divorced. Since it's now community property, it all gets split equally.

Your Family (or even favorite charity) vs. Uncle Sam: The Need for Tax Planning

Let's assume that rather than one house, an individual or couple owns a variety of real estate assets, such as their primary home (\$450,000 equity), income property (\$1M equity), and a vacation home (\$225,000 equity).

Beside probate avoidance, estate planning can assist with tax planning in order to help avoid, defer or minimize estate tax. Such is necessary for any individual or couple whose combined estate this year exceeds \$1.5M.

Proper estate planning can help people take full advantage of their lifetime estate and annual gift tax exemptions, or in the case of married couples, at least enable them to decide when it is most advantageous to pay any tax due (upon first versus second death).

Estate planning can help you devise several possible solutions that will help you control the transfer of your wealth while minimizing

the depletion of your estate.

Centralized Management, Creativity & Flexibility

A well thought out estate plan will also help you get the assets you choose to the right beneficiaries under the circumstances of your choosing.

For instance, deciding when and how your children or anyone else should receive their inheritance, whether in stages, upon the occurrence of certain events or accomplishments, or maybe that they should only have a right to the income for life with the principal passing to others or to a charity all require centralized management. An estate plan can accomplish any of these goals and methods.

Gough

FROM PAGE B2

and other high-cost debt is one of the best long-term investments you can make. Not only do you save yourself from wasting money on interest payments, you also free up more of your income to put into your investments, which strengthens your portfolio even more.

Building a successful portfolio is

Making 'cents' out of vinyl window choices

NAPSI
 Vinyl windows are easy to maintain and they stand up to harsh weather conditions, pollution and the demands of daily use. But with the benefits come a few choices. Evaluating these options can seem overwhelming with so many styles and features to choose from.

Your primary decision — style — will dramatically affect your home's interior and exterior look. Whether retrofitting an older home, or choosing windows for a custom-built home, the style should fit the application, your home's design, and your personal style preference.

Leading vinyl window manufacturers like CertainTeed, offer window choices for specific U.S. regions and a variety of home styles.

■ Casement windows are optimal for applications where vertical wall space is at a premium. They open to the side, feature easy-to-use hardware, and allow for maximum light and air.

■ Bay and bow windows provide exterior architectural interest from the exterior and can transform a room by adding space and a scenic view.

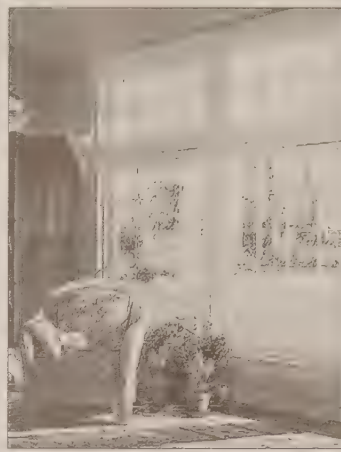
■ Double-hung windows provide a more traditional look that blends well with many older homes.

■ Slider windows are more contemporary and provide open views and good ventilation.

■ Geometric windows are great for adding a point of interest to a room.

■ Garden windows allow year-round gardening, focal interest and complement any kitchen.

■ Patio doors provide scenic



WHETHER RETROFITTING an older home, or choosing windows for a new custom-built home, the style should fit your home's design.

viewpoints and easy access to outdoor living spaces.

Once you've decided on a style, compare the less obvious performance features. Getting the right energy efficiency, hardware and warranty features up front will assure a sound investment.

Ask the following:

1. What features do these windows offer that others don't? Seek key features that meet your personal lifestyle preferences.
2. Do these windows feature energy efficient glazing or a third-party energy rating? For example, Cer-

tainTeed's Thermaguard glazing offers energy efficiency that also blocks harmful UV rays and helps keep a home comfortable in varied climates.

3. Are these the best windows for the weather conditions in my neighborhood?

4. What about a warranty? No matter what style window you choose, it is critical to choose windows backed with a warranty.

For more information on stylish and maintenance-free vinyl windows to fit your lifestyle, visit www.certainteed.com.

Hamilton

FROM PAGE B2

25 percent to 35 percent higher than they are today and interest rates slightly higher: 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent.

As such, you can possibly get a fair rate of return on your "investment" over the next five years while still being able to deduct mortgage interest and property tax expenses.

However, renting the place would solely be up to you. Do you have the desire to have someone else potentially damage your re-

irement home? Also, where you desire to eventually live may not allow rentals.

The final choice is up to you, but I think that you have chosen wisely for your retirement years, so pick a good place!

For restrictions on mortgage interest deductibility, see IRS Publication 936.

Tom Hamilton, Ph.D., is associate professor at the Shenehon Center for Real Estate Education at the University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis. E-mail questions to: thamilton@stthomas.edu. Please include name, city and state.

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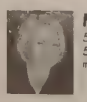
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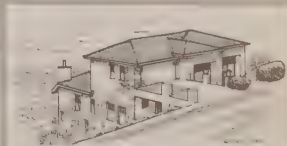


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Open Home Guide
 page B16

Role reversal: Providing support for your parents

'A' home away from ho

BY LAURA C. STEAGALL-CISSELL

AMERICAN EXPRESS FINANCIAL ADVISORS

In the back of your mind, you always knew the day could come when the parent-child roles might be reversed, and you would need to become your parents' caregiver.

Although you may have been expecting it for a while and might have even prepared emotionally, if you are like most Americans, you are not ready for the financial challenges of caring for your aging parents.

According to Senior Link, an elder care management company, 25 percent of the U.S. work force is providing care to an aging relative. Furthermore, since the fastest growing segment of the population is people over age 85, the number of children providing support for aging parents is due to rise significantly.

The extraordinary costs for long-term needs of an aging parent can quickly deplete your finances.

The average price of a long-term care facility can exceed \$50,000 per year, and many Americans have the misconception that Medicare will cover these costs.

Medicare may actually cover a short-term hospitalization for rehabilitation needs at a nursing home but not the full amount of costs you would likely incur. Additionally, Medicare currently does not cover the high cost of prescription drugs.

Below are a few tips to help you and your family plan ahead:

1. Open up a dialogue: Talking to your parents about their financial stability, medical, health and long-term care insurance; wills; living trusts; and power-of-attorney privileges is not an easy task.

Starting this conversation early, before there is an immediate need for any of these items will allow more time for you and your parents to work toward mutually desired goals, to assess current budgets and to review finances together.

Including siblings in these conversations also can be helpful. In some cases, parents feel they need to speak with someone outside of the family, and this wish should be respected.

Help them find a trusted finan-

cial advisor or attorney who will be able to assist them with their finances and estate planning.

2. Understand the differences: There is a lot of confusion about Medicare, Medicaid and Medigap and what they cover, so take the time to learn about each. Following is a quick explanation. For more in-depth information, log on to www.medicare.gov.

A. Medicare: Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people 65 years of age or older. Medicare Part A covers hospitalization, current deductible of \$840 and Medicare Part B covers treatment.

B. Medicaid: Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that helps cover medical costs for some people with low incomes and limited resources.

Medicaid programs vary from state to state, but much of your health care costs will likely be covered if you qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid.

C. Medigap: Medigap is Medicare supplemental insurance, it is a health insurance policy sold by private companies to fill gaps in Medicare, such as the cost of prescription drugs.

3. Keep liquid emergency reserves: Another good rule of thumb, as in any comprehensive financial plan, is to have a cash reserve of at least three to six months' worth of expenses in case of emergency.

This will come in handy not only if you are laid off, but also if either Mom or Dad should need long-term care or assistance sooner than you expected.

Save emergency reserves in accounts that are easily accessible, such as mutual funds, short-term bonds, CDs and money market accounts. This will allow you to draw upon these funds quickly and without a penalty for early withdrawal, as with IRAs and 401(k)s.

4. Paying for long-term care: When paying directly for your parents' care, whether it is for qualified home care or at a qualified nursing home provider, you should be aware of important tax considerations. Any payments exceeding \$11,000 per year per person are subject to federal gift taxes. One

way to avoid the federal gift taxes is to make the payments directly to a qualified medical service provider rather than to your parents*. This financial support also may contribute towards meeting IRS guidelines allowing adults to claim their parents as dependents. If they meet IRS guidelines they can file an additional personal exemption and reduce their adjusted gross income by \$3,050, for 2003 or by \$3,100, for 2004.

Note: While the portion paid for medical services qualifies for the gift tax exclusion, any portion paid for non-medical services, such as food and lodging, may not qualify.

5. Use resources: Many useful resources and organizations are available to adults caring for their parents. Eldercare.gov helps find local services for seniors, the National Alliance, for Caregiving (www.caregiving.org) is dedicated to providing support for family members and professional caregivers, and Children of Aging Parents (www.caps4caregivers.org) is non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to assisting family caregivers.

6. Find the balance: While baby boomers are preparing for and taking care of their aging parents, and

In many cases, simultaneously supporting and saving for their own children, they should not forget to plan and prepare for their own retirement needs and long-term financial goals.

7. Seek help: This is a prime opportunity for people with aging parents to reflect on their personal economy and take time to calculate, plan and save for their own retirement goals. Seek the assistance of a qualified financial advisor who can help you create a comprehensive financial plan.

This information is provided for informational purposes only. The information is intended to be generic in nature and should not be applied or relied upon in any particular situation without the advice of your tax, legal and/or your financial advisor. The views expressed may not be suitable for every situation.

American Express Financial Advisors Inc. Member NASD, American Express Company is separate from American Express Financial Advisors Inc. and is not a broker-dealer.

Laura C. Steagall-Cissell is a financial advisor with American Express Financial Advisors in Walnut Creek. She can be reached at 925-476-4726.

PROJECT OF THE WEEK

BY DON AND DAVE RUNYAN

JBLD FEATURES

It's no surprise that the A-frame design is one of the most popular for second homes. An A-frame offers the features most often desired in a vacation home—openness, ample sleeping space, out-of-the-way storage areas and spacious decks in an attractive, economic, simple and strong package. This do-it-yourself A-frame cabin has 700 square feet of living space.

The cabin includes a compact (but complete) kitchen, a bathroom, a living room, a bedroom and a deck on the first floor and two bedrooms and a balcony on the second.

A central fireplace warms both floors. The simplicity of the design also makes it relatively easy and inexpensive to build. The main structure is formed by two large A-frames of heavy beams that are joined by a central roof beam.

The roof itself is made of exterior-grade plywood panels lapped

like giant shingles, with fastening consists of metal spikes. It's a big, long-term project, but it's also fun, highly portable and a valuable investment.

The A-Frame Cabin, model 381, is \$9.95 and includes floor plans and elevations with all dimensions, construction with 10 photos, detailed materials list. Do-it-yourselfers should be aware that alterations may be necessary to form to local building codes. Package of three cabins, model 381, is \$22.95 and includes cabin project plus two color photos of your project. To order by credit card, call 828-2453. Visit U-bld.com at U-bld.com

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Built in traditional architecture in 1923, these lovely stacked flats are 1,000 square feet each of living space. Each flat has 2+ bedrooms and one full living and formal dining rooms, hardwood floors, and top-midway appliances. This home is for the family or families that want the refinement of old-style living, and fabulous, walk-to-shop location.

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Just Listed ~ A Rockridge Jewel

OPEN SUNDAY, MARCH 7 & 14, 2-4:30PM

5405 Belgrave Place, Oakland

Old and new are artfully united in this beautifully restored and updated 1914 traditional home. The upgraded electrical, plumbing, and heating systems, remodeled kitchen and baths, and lovely craftsman light fixtures enhance the fine architectural detailing. 4+ bedrooms, 2.5 baths. Two "bonus" rooms. Fully equipped cook's kitchen with 6 burner gas range. Completely rebuilt garage. Level yard.

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2 New Listings

OPEN SUN 2-4

4160 BELL AVE., RICHMOND

#063 - Spacious Gem with modern kitchen, dining rm w/entry to patio, play area & yard for children. Skylights in bathroom. Lovely home & great neighborhood. Easy access to I-80 & 580. Carpool to San Francisco **\$419,900**

#018 - Great starter home with income potential from separate "in-law" unit in back. Fresh interior & exterior painting and new carpet in the main house. Walk to El Cerrito BART and the Plaza **\$494,900**

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New Listing

OPEN SATURDAY MARCH 6, 2-4:30PM
OPEN SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2-4:30PM

6363 Contra Costa Road, Oakland

Elegant and sophisticated, this exciting Upper Rockridge 5+ bedroom, 3.5 bath home boasts a fabulous designer kitchen, and stunning San Francisco Bay views. The lovely roof deck/garden is a perfect setting for catching sunsets while multiple decks and the rear garden and patio enhance indoor and outdoor living. A must see!

View online at www.6363ContraCosta.com

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What's a negative amortization loan?

How a negative amortization loan works

Major lenders are outdoing each other, vying for the lowest payment rates available on adjustable rate mortgage (ARM) products. Washington Mutual Bank (the giant who has the local savings and loans) and the local savings and loans (aka America's Countrywide) have recently reduced the first year's "minimum payment" to 1.25 percent, considerably lower than World Savings Bank's 1.95 percent on their 5-year ARM program.

Option ARM offers the borrower a monthly payment option. Borrower can make the minimum payment; an interest only payment based on an index plus a margin, or the fully indexed payment. A fully amortized payment is either 30 or 40 year amortization at the fully indexed rate or 10 year payment, also at the indexed rate.

A payment option that scares people is the minimum payment because it incurs negative amortization. What is negative



KAREN SENZIG
Mortgage Madress

amortization?

Amortization refers to paying the loan principal off through individual payments over time. This is accomplished with a monthly payment, which in part goes to pay the accrued interest from the date of the last monthly payment, and part is applied to the principal.

"Positive Amortization" means that as interest accrues, it's fully paid in each monthly payment cycle. Also, some of the principal gets

paid each month in order to discharge the debt.

In the early years of a 30-year mortgage, the portion of the monthly payment applied to the principal is minuscule compared to the interest paid. Gradually, as the principal is paid down, the amount of interest owed each month gets smaller and smaller. During the life of a 30-year mortgage you will pay more in interest than principal until the sixteenth year of the loan.

"Negative Amortization" (Neg-Am) describes the principal increases after a payment is made. This occurs because the monthly payment is not large enough to cover the accrued interest (also known as "less than interest only"), and the unpaid interest is added to the principal. The lenders refer to neg-am as like getting a little loan

Some retired folks use this loan product as way to improve their lifestyle. Those who choose this strategy figure that they are using their home to make their life easier.

from the bank every month without having to fuss with all the paper work — or — that you are using the equity in your home to help you make the monthly payment, so you can buy more house for your money. But, keep in mind that allowing negative amortization to occur with the justification that appreciation will cover your growing

principal is not always a good plan. We've seen corrections in the market before. There is no escape: Pay now or pay more later.

The important thing to know is that neg-am can be avoided. You will always have the option of paying interest only fully amortized or the 15 year payment. How does a neg-am loan work? ARMs have

"caps" to protect you in case of skyrocketing interest rates and the index value going through the roof. In a neg-am ARM, however, one of these caps, the minimum payment cap, only goes part way in shielding you.

On the plus side, the minimum

See SENZIG, Page B7

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New Listing
OPEN SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1-5PM

1801 Melvin Road, Oakland

Magnificent estate surrounded by glorious Mediterranean gardens. Built in 1934, this gracious home was designed by Bay Area architect Raymond Keefer for the local family of Oakland. The home is a masterpiece of architectural detail set on a promontory with superb views. The home and grounds offer a luxurious environment of graciousness and tranquility. There are four large bedrooms, three and one-half baths and extensive room for formal and informal entertaining.

Offered at \$1,350,000

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Broker Associate (510) 338-1336

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775 Keeler Ave., Berkeley
PENDING
Magnificent hideaway. Julian Taylor designed, large view home off a private driveway. Elegant by design, great views, large kitchen, master bedroom with a large bathroom, two other baths, study, and a master bedroom with living areas. Enjoy a large deck, garden, and two-car carport.
Mara Trilling 524-9888 x18 \$980,000

650 Liberty Street, El Cerrito
Open Sunday, 2:00 - 4:00
New Listing! Bright and sunny El Cerrito 2 bedroom with gleaming, finished maple wood floors. Sliding door leads to secluded deck and garden. Detached garage with workshop area.
Don and Kay 524-9888 x51 \$398,000

1049 Pomona Ave., Albany
Open Sunday, 2:00 - 4:00
New Listing! 2 bedrooms, 1 bath. Light, livable fixer in a great neighborhood. Wonderful original 1926 details, a full plan and lots of room for a workshop in the basement. Newer roof plus a functional kitchen and bath.
Bob & Tracy 524-9888 x33 \$449,000

What a big event in my life—owning a house! You have been so wonderful helping me through all the stages and providing me with a smooth transition to full ownership. Your professionalism shone throughout. Thanks for your generosity in giving time, care, attention to all my needs."
— S. S., El Cerrito

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2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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BERKELEY \$469,000
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Immaculate one-level remodeled 3BD/2BA home at desirable El Cerrito
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BERKELEY \$1,100,000
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those big increases and helps you stabilize your budget.

The bad news is that the minimum payment cap rate will still most likely be less than the fully indexed rate that the positive amortization is based.

Remember that the margin is fixed for the life of the loan. The index is usually some economic statistic independently determined outside the lenders control such as the Monthly Treasury Average (MTA) or the 11th District Cost of Funds In-

dex (COFI). World Savings uses two of their own indices, their own Cost of Deposits Index (CODI) or their Cost of Savings Index (COSI).

Why get a neg-arm?

One good reason to pick a neg-arm loan is to help you qualify for a larger loan than other mortgage products will allow or to help you if you are having problems qualifying because of income constraints. Few other mortgage offer a lower qualifying rate. Another reason is to take

full advantage of falling interest rates during the initial years of the mortgage. If rates are going down, you will want to have your fully indexed rate fall with the market and your fully indexed rate changes monthly.

For self-employed people whose income are not static but can have wide swings from month to month, this can be a wonderful cash management tool. You can always repay the deferred interest (neg-am) down the road.

Some retired folks use this loan

product as way to improve their lifestyle.

We had some folks who own their home free and clear. Their little bungalow that they purchased over 30 years ago is worth \$400,000. They borrow \$100,000. They put \$50,000 into an interest bearing account and have the minimum payment automatically withdrawn from the account. They get another \$50,000 to supplement their lifestyle and don't need to think about payments for at least 8 or

nine years. Sure by that time the loan will have grown to about \$120,000 or so, but those who choose this strategy figure that they are using their home to make their life easier. And, they reason, they can always refinance again.

And, as I mentioned before, neg-arm is a great way to take out a little loan every month without all the paperwork.

Karen Senzig can be reached at 510-339-8511, fax 510-339-3814 or email at ksenzig@aol.com.

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16 Humphrey Place, Crocker Highlands

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661 Via Rialto, Oakland

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JUDITH CAIN
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Stunning Montclair Home



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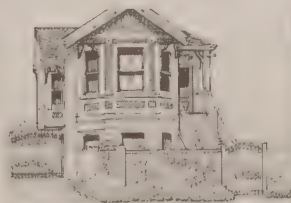
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1627 Russell Street Open 2-4



BERKELEY - NEW LISTING! \$424,000
2+1/2 - Contractors Alert! 2 kitchens. Great yard Needs lots of work
1429 Channing Street Open 2-5



OAKLAND \$646,000
6/2 - Your search ends here! Space galore in this Craftsman with detached studio cottage. Great convenience - near College Ave. BART! Must see!
506 Forest Street Open 2-5



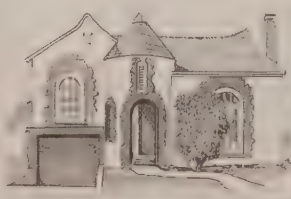
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LOFT - Artist's live/work loft with studio-workshop. Two stories, high ceilings, factory windows, roll-up door. Rental and/or development potential
874 41st Street Open 2-4:30



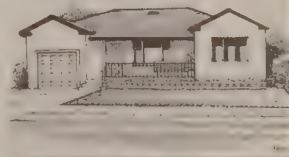
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Urban oasis - home + income. 2bd/1ba house PLUS a detached non-conforming in-law cottage & large workshop. www.saragarabedian.com
2021 7th Avenue Open 2-4:30



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Must association tell its owners about lawsuits?

BY ROBERT J. BRUSS,
ATTORNEY AT LAW
INMAN NEWS FEATURES

The California Northridge earthquake in 1994 severely damaged the Nordhoff Townhomes. After the earthquake, for \$25,000 Sam purchased uninhabitable unit 13 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which foreclosed on its FHA mortgage for non-payment by the previous owner.

Sam never lived in the townhome he purchased. On July 22, 1998, he sold the townhome to Ismael and Maria for \$53,500. During the time he owned the townhome, Sam was aware the homeowner's association was negotiating with its earthquake insurance carrier for payment of damages. Several update notices were sent to condo owners informing them of the progress (or lack thereof).

However, unknown to Sam and the other condo owners, on April 3, 1998, the Nordhoff homeowner's association sued its insurer for bad faith failure to pay the earthquake damage claim. The condo owners were notified of this lawsuit on July 29, 1998, a week after Sam sold unit 13 to Ismael and Maria.

In May 2000, the homeowner's association settled its lawsuit with the insurer for \$20 million. The proceeds were distributed to the then-current condo owners. Ismael and Maria received \$180,000.

Upon learning this information, Sam sued the Nordhoff homeowner's association, alleging breach of fiduciary duty, negligence and a constructive trust for failure to notify him of the lawsuit filing before he sold unit 13. The homeowner's association replied it had no legal duty to notify members it was suing the insurance company.

If you were the judge would you rule the homeowner's association had a duty to promptly notify its members, including Sam, of filing the lawsuit?

The judge said no.

Although a homeowner's association has a duty to keep its members informed of its actions, which might affect the members, the judge began, there is no duty to notify the members when a lawsuit is filed in a long-pending dispute. That duty

was satisfied by the association's many letters to the members about the insurance issues, he added.

"A homeowner's association has a fiduciary relationship with its members, at least with respect to dealing with the homeowner's unit. There is no provision in the CC&Rs (covenants, conditions and restrictions) requiring the association to notify its members of the filing of litigation," the judge ruled.

Therefore, the homeowner's association had no duty or liability to its members, such as Sam, to keep them informed when it filed a lawsuit to attempt to recover insurance proceeds for its members, the judge concluded.

Zanna Knight is named Seniors Real Estate Specialist

COLDWELL BANKER

BERKELEY — Coldwell Banker's in Berkeley recently announced that Zanna Knight has been named a Seniors Real Estate Specialist (SRES). With this new designation, Knight will specialize in real estate services with older homebuyers and sellers. "This designation is a symbol of Zanna's dedication to her clients," said Marcia Schwartz, Coldwell Banker Berkeley manager. "She is a remarkable member of the Coldwell Banker family and we're proud of her accomplishment."

As a SRES, Knight is part of a nationwide network of real estate professionals who specialize in the legal, financial and personal issues that may affect the 55-plus popula-

tion. SRES help seniors make wise decisions about selling their homes, buying rental properties, obtaining a reverse mortgage, moving to a senior community, managing the capital gains, and estate tax implications of owning real estate.

The Senior Advantage Real Estate Council (SAREC) tracks the special issues and needs of senior property owners and provides education to Realtors who make seniors an important focus of their business. The SRES designation was introduced in 1997 and is nationally recognized.

More information: SAREC is available by calling 800-554-5454 or at seniorsrealestate.com. Knight can be reached at Coldwell Banker Residential, Berkeley, located at Ave. or at 510-991-

More information: SAREC is available by calling 800-554-5454 or at seniorsrealestate.com. Knight can be reached at Coldwell Banker Residential, Berkeley, located at Ave. or at 510-991-

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3045 Deakin Street, Berkeley

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Berkeley Townhouse

Near UC Berkeley. 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, master suite, skylight, fireplace. \$425,000

Alameda Home - 2022 High Street

Two master suites, ceiling height, fireplace, security gate, deep water dock for your boat! \$500,000

Alameda Home - 8 Willet Court

4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, only 10 years new, granite, file, customized throughout, expertly landscaped. Must see!

Harbor Bay

Two master suites, steps from Harbor Bay Ferry. I represented the buyer



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An Evening With JOHN EXLINE

Find out why Real Estate will outperform the stock market

Hi, I'm John Exline and I'd like to invite you to a FREE, 90-minute seminar this Tuesday called:
Generating Wealth in Bay Area Real Estate

Which is worth more . . . The value in your house OR the amount you have in your stock portfolio or 401k? Answer: Most families have made more money in real estate than all of their other investments & retirement plans - combined.

One client recently concluded that he'd need to save over \$25,000 per year to be able to retire in 20-years. He has done much better than that with his real estate investments - and most of his gains were TAX-FREE. We'll show you how you can do this, and much more.

What You'll Learn At The Seminar
Whether you currently own one house - or ten, you will learn NEW techniques that will take you to the next-level in building your real estate portfolio in the fastest & safest ways possible.

I'll share stories from many of my clients on how to acquire the most real estate with your current assets, job & income, how the recent tax laws give you tax-free or tax-deferred transactions, the best types of properties to acquire, how to use your 401k to acquire real estate, how to arrange equity-share agreements and so much more.

This is a free seminar and there is absolutely nothing to buy. Please join us this Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

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San Ramon Marriott

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Directions : Hwy-680 to Bollinger exit (East), 1st left on to Sunset, 2nd left on to Bishop

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SOLD \$395,000

14638 Outrigger Drive
3BD/2.5BA Townhouse-style, Attached Two Car Garage.
SOLD \$425,000



1 NIGHT ONLY
MARCH 13
TUESDAY

6:30pm - 8:00pm

FREE Admission
No RSVP

New guidebook is for successful realty agents

THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS AS A REAL ESTATE AGENT by Marilyn Sullivan (Alpha Books, Indianapolis, Ind.), 321 pages; Available in paperback by special order at local libraries and public libraries and



ROBERT BRUSS

are a real estate agent, or of becoming a real estate agent. "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Success as a Real Estate Agent" by Marilyn Sullivan is a must read for anyone who doesn't like to be turned off by the book. The new guidebook begins very simply, almost boringly, but by the time it evolves into a winner. The book provides a survey of what a real estate agent should expect and what experienced realty agents aspire to become. The book starts out by explaining the alternatives a person considering a real estate career should consider. Sullivan explains how to consider real estate as a career, then she shares with many people contemplating a career often choose real estate as a primary residential sales. She also emphasizes alternative careers such as commercial real estate brokerage, appraisal and property management. The examples make the ex-

planations very realistic.

The worst part of the book explains the pre-license real estate education requirements (which vary state by state). Then Sullivan launches into the ordeal of taking the license exam, an equally boring topic. Finally, she switches to the more interesting topic of how to select your real estate office if you elect to enter residential real estate sales.

"The best way to start out on the right foot is to act as if you have a regular job. Of course, you don't, and that's why you're smiling. But if you adopt the work ethic an employer would require of you, you will develop a discipline that will serve you for the rest of your career," Sullivan advises.

The author advises the reader to specialize. By that she means new licensees should choose a specialty such as relocation buyers and sellers, first-time home buyers, retirement housing, luxury home sales, or a specific neighborhood.

Then she emphasizes why today's successful realty agents shouldn't tackle all specialties, except perhaps in a small town.

Heavy emphasis is placed on why today's successful "top dog" realty agents need to understand and use technology. Although Sullivan never gets down to specifics, she heavily recommends laptop computers, personal digital assistants (PDA), and computerized daily plans. It would have been helpful if she recommended products and software that she uses. "Wear your self off of paper," the author advises.

One of the book's best chapters suggests how to build a 20-year referral system. Then she explains "The referral system model is based on the premise that every qualified person you come in contact with becomes a relationship you will have for the next 20 years." Next, Sullivan shows how to keep in contact with people you meet who may not be hot buyers or sellers but they will refer profitable clients if you keep in touch.

Toward the book's conclusion, the author explains her "New Ideal" image for "Top Dog" real estate successful agents. Perhaps a bit idealistic, Sullivan expresses her wishful thinking by stating "You've come to a profession that is held in low esteem. On the ladder of disrespect, real estate agents come just

above used-car salesmen." Then she emphasizes how successful realty agents are "facilitators" like doctors and accountants, rather than hard sell salespersons.

Chapter topics include "The Attraction of Real Estate"; "The Spectrum of Careers"; "A Day in the Life"; "Your Prelicensing Education"; "Choosing Your Office"; "Building Your Business"; "Building Your Power Team"; "Making Your Market"; "Managing the Time Demon"; "Computer Technology"; "Building a Referral Stream System"; "The New Ideal"; "A Winning Listing Presentation"; "Using the Transaction Documents"; "Cutting-Edge Top Dogs"; "Staging Your Listings"; and "Future Income Streams."

At first, as a weekly reviewer of real estate books for many years, I didn't like this book (primarily because of its title). But the more I read, the better I liked the author's ideas and explanations. Although this new book is far from perfect, it provides a great introduction to real estate sales careers and what it takes to be successful. On my scale of one to 10, it rates a solid 10.

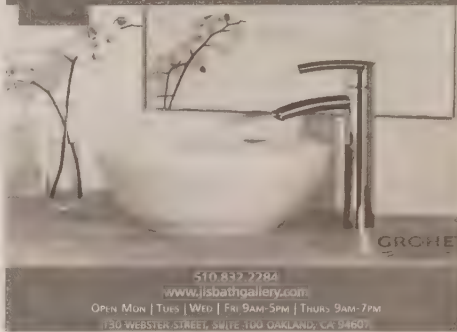
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www.MontclairBetterHomes.com

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March 7
2:00 to 4:30



BRIDGE
3555 Miles Avenue
\$975,000
Bedroom 1908 house with two 1 bedroom apartments built in 1950, walk to BART and College Avenue, multiple shops, restaurants. Lot is 10,000 square feet, live in house with income from the two additional units. Garages and extra parking and separate gardens.
meandmichelle.com
510-339-4554

PIEDMONT \$749,000

1835 Trestle Glen
2 bedroom, 1.5 bath traditional home in Piedmont. Freshly painted with hardwood floors throughout. Spacious living room features wood burning fireplace and oversized windows. Kitchen offers access to side patio and breakfast bar adjacent to dining area. Inviting front and back patios. 2 car detached garage with plus room.
Nahid Nassiri 510-899-6226



MONTCLAIR \$615,000

6150 Gouldin Road
Inviting all level home. This three bedroom 2 updated bathroom home has a great backyard and fresh paint inside and out. 2 car detached garage with extra storage. Walk to Thornhill shops and public transportation. 5 blocks to Montclair Village. Open 2-5
Jack Brenneman 510-339-4557



OAKLAND \$595,000
4491 Montgomery Street
Cape Cod Townhome! Piedmont Avenue area townhome with 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on cul de sac. Updated eat-in kitchen, newly refurbished hardwood floors and new carpeting. Master suite with deck with North Bay view. Open 2-5
Michael Thompson 510-339-5775

EMERYVILLE \$439,000

1012 47th Street
Pride of Ownership! Very nice 3 bedroom 2 bath home, brick fireplace, dining area, hardwood floors, front and rear yard, detached garage! Convenient location. A must see!
Lila Owens 510-339-4000



OAKLAND \$420,000

2315 Damuth Street
New Listing! This light-filled craftsman is a delightful starter home with built-ins, updated bath, brick fireplace, and even a peek of the Bay. A spacious plus room downstairs with separate entrance, private backyard and great commuter location make this 2 bedroom and 1 bath home truly a delight!
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MORAGA \$339,950

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By Appointment

ALAMO \$1,197,000

Three bedroom, three bath home on approximately 1/2 acre flat lot. Spacious room with newer roof, A/C and resurfaced pool with security locks. Hardwood floors, dual pane windows, 2 fireplaces and neutral colors. Private park-like setting at end of court.
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DANVILLE \$939,000

Double door entry, soaring ceilings, picturesque bay window, crown molding dual pane windows, gourmet kitchen with granite counters, center island and white cabinets, one bedroom and bath downstairs, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, den/office, huge master suite upstairs.
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PLEASANTON \$874,950

Three bedroom 2 bath remodeled kitchen and baths. Hardwood and tile floors. Dual pane windows. Barn with 2 portable stalls. 2 garages for 4 cars. Updated heating and A/C. Private backyard with spa and picnic area.
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OAKLAND \$699,000

Spacious traditional on Oakmore border. Large level yard, master suite and Spanish style details of 1935! See virtual tour at PatriciaBennett.com, featured listings.
Patricia Bennett 510-482-9000

OAKLAND \$650,000

Large level commercial lot at high traffic intersection. Over 13K square feet. Zoned C-10. High visibility and huge potential. Many uses, Across from Bishop O'Dowd High School. Near all major bus lines. Next to 580 freeway entrance. 2708 98th Avenue.
Ken Nwokedi 510-339-4000

OAKLAND \$649,950

A traditional 4 BD/2 BA Montclair home with remodeled kitchen and bath. Double pane windows, new carpet, new paint, gleaming HWF, fireplace and laundry room.
Danville Better Homes 925-837-2200

OAKLAND \$450,000

Nice 4-plex with excellent income. Aggressive pricing. All 2/1 units are rented and separately metered. Steady OHA market rents. Cash is king, where is yours coming from?
685 37th Street.
Ken Nwokedi 510-339-4000

OAKLAND \$375,000

Clean duplex on huge lot. Much room for expansion. Lower unit remodeled and vacant. Upstairs unit occupied at market rent through OHA. Both units are large 3 bedroom 1 bath units.
2925 Martin Luther King Way.
Ken Nwokedi 510-339-4000

OAKLAND \$270,000

Cute and clean condo overlooking lush courtyard. Must see this 2 bedroom, 1 bath gem with remodeled kitchen and bath, tiled entry and recessed lights. Security building. Parking and laundry on site.
360 Vernon Street#111.
Ken Nwokedi 510-339-4000

OAKLAND \$255,000

The ultimate starter home! Updated kitchen and bath, new carpet, walk-in closet, extended driveway leading to a detached garage, large yard with fruit trees and patio. Renters, you can call this 2 BD/ 1 BA home and save on taxes.
Rochelle Anthony 510-339-4000

Commercial



OAKLAND \$1,350,000

Gorgeous and classic Victorian building. 8200 +/- square feet. 4100 sq.ft. of bar/restaurant and leased retail space downstairs, 4100 sq.ft. of framed office or residential space upstairs. In the heart of Oakland's Auto Row.
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IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING A MOVE, PLEASE CALL US!



JOHN SCHNEIDER

Over the past several months, I have had the opportunity to work with several home owners who have successfully used the municipal court system to resolve complaints against contractors regarding workmanship and contract disputes.

The easiest and least expensive way for the consumer to legally resolve contractor issues, is through small claims court.

Here's how to use this court process to settle disputes over workmanship and the performance of a contract.

Small claims court is unique in that the hearing is informal, the rules are simple, and attorneys are not allowed. Although claims are limited to \$5,000.00, small claims court can offer consumers a speedy resolution in most cases. The secret to being successful when presenting a claim is the ability to prove your case and present the facts in a documented and concise manner.

When deciding to use small claims to resolve a dispute, a consumer must consider three things

to determine if this is the right process to potentially resolve the issue. They must consider the contractor's legal responsibilities, the existence and terms of the contract, and the amount of money involved. Each of these items must be reviewed to determine what legal issues will be raised, and what issues will have to be defended.

Let's start with the contractor's responsibilities. For a person to engage in work involving more than \$500.00 of material and labor (in the State of California), he or she must have an appropriate license for the work they are performing, and must abide by Contractor License Law. This basically means the contractor has the required liability insurance, workmen compensation insurance, and license bond. The contractor must also offer a contract with the required notices to the owner, obtain permits for the work, and perform the work in a manner that reflects industry standards. These are legal obligations of the contractor.

Now let's consider the contract, the most important piece of evidence for your case. It should contain the contract amount, responsibilities of the contractor,

specifications for the work, a start date, and terms of payment. It should also contain the contractor's license number, and the "Notice to Owner" statement about lien rights. If any of the required notices are not in the contract, the contractor may be in violation of license law. If the contract does not contain a specific start date or specifications for the job, it may be a disadvantage to the consumer in trying to establish their claim.

The consumer's responsibilities revolve around the fact that they requested the contract, and agreed to the price and terms. This means that as long as the contractor performs the work according to the contract and that the work was done in a workmanlike manner, the consumer shall pay the agreed upon price.

The final consideration is the fact that the claim in the dispute cannot exceed the maximum amount of \$5,000.00. If you decide to use small claims court to resolve an issue between you and the contractor, you will be the "plaintiff" (the person filing the lawsuit), and the contractor will be the defendant (the person being sued). However, before you can actually file a claim,

INSIDE AND OUT

Small claims court is available for home repair disputes

you must first prove that you have contacted the defendant and requested payment or restitution for damages you have suffered. It is best to do this in writing.

A claim is usually filed in the county within which the contract was entered into, or the work performed, and must be filed within certain statutes of limitations. If the claim involves an oral contract, the statute of limitation is two years, a written contract has a four year statute of limitation, and if there was an injury involved, the claim must be made within one year of the injury or its discovery.

Once the claim is filed with the Clerk of the Court, the other party must be served notice of the claim. This can be done via the mail, or through the services of a process server. If you suspect that the person being served will not be forthcoming in accepting the notice,

you will want to use a process server. The costs of serving an individual are usually collectable as court costs.

When you go to Small Claims Court, you will need to bring three copies of all documentation. It's important for you to have documentation regarding the contract and proof of all the damages claimed, in a organized and concise manner.

Before your case is heard, you will be asked to share all of your evidence with the other party, so they will know what you will be presenting. You will then need to present a copy to the judge. Once the other party has reviewed the information, you will be able to present your case first, and then the defendant will respond. It's best if you do not interrupt when the other side is speaking, the judge will give you time to respond.

After hearing both sides, the judge will usually take time to consider and render a decision on the day of his or her decision. Once you receive a decision, you will want to collect the money from the defendant, because the defendant has 30 days to pay, or the case becomes legally enforceable.

For more information on small claims court, About Homes has developed a page consumer handbook, which can obtain for free by our office, or by visiting our website at www.allabouthomes.com and clicking on the "Legal Resources" link, and "Small Claims" link. John R. Schneider is a general building contractor, certified residential code official. He is president of All About Homes.

Trees and power lines are a dangerous duo

NAPSI

Trees can provide shade, beauty and fresh air around your home — but they can also be dangerous if planted too close to electrical power lines.

The experts at the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) and the American Public Power Association (APPA) say power outages can occur and dangerous electric shock hazards can develop if tree limbs touch electric wires or if branches fall on the utility line.

"Trees can also hinder utility repair work and recognition of a hazard," warned ESFI executive director Michael G. Clendenin. For that reason, ESFI and APPA recommend that only naturally low-growing trees should be planted under or near overhead utility wires.

To prevent trees from interfering with power lines, ESFI recommends that homeowners call on their electric utility or a tree trimming professional to prune even questionable tree limbs. Trimming trees near power lines can, itself, be very dan-

gerous, and should be handled only by trained professionals.

Also, tell your children not to climb trees that are close to power lines.

"It takes only 10 to 40 milliamps for serious injury and even death to occur. Utility power lines can carry thousands of volts, nearly ensuring death to the victim," added Clendenin.

Find more safety tips online at the Foundation's Web site: www.electrical-safety.org or call 703-841-3229.

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Offered at \$875,000

Karen Lum, Realtor
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SOLD



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OAKLAND

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GLEN ECHO PARK OAKLAND

OPEN SUNDAY
March 7



OPEN HOURS
1:00-5:00 PM

388 Fairmount Ave.

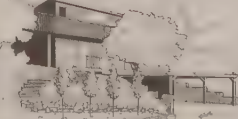
Grand old dame built in 1907! This stately traditional home features high ceilings in the living and dining room, wainscoting in dining and master bedroom, wood floors, old country kitchen with eating space, and there's pull-down stairs for access to huge attic space! Plus there's a backyard with planter boxes and a patio area for play. Such a wonderful place to call HOME!

Offered at \$529,000

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Tour at www.donnaconroy.com

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PANORAMIC VIEWS



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All new kitchen, bathrooms, floors and windows are ready for your creative touches — great expansive Terrific Bay views from the living room, kitchen, and front decks enhance every day life. A large lot surrounds the house with beautiful outside vistas and even greater views.

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Reid

FROM PAGE B11

Investors

Real Estate can bring retirement security. Learn more about the real estate 1031 Exchange process. Attend an informational seminar with expert guest speakers. The seminar is held Tuesday, March 9, at the San Leandro Main Library. To register call the seminar hotline at 888-629-0077 x8610.

Affordable

The Central Valley still offers homes in an affordable price range. Before you start your search, spend two hours educating yourself on the home buying process. Learn more at the Real Estate Seminar. To reserve a spot call the hotline at 209-834-2682.

Handyman

The Building Education Center in Berkeley provides ongoing classes, lectures and events for the experienced and those new to remodeling and renovation.

There are evening classes on weekdays and daytime classes on the weekends. For information on classes and costs call the center. Contact Sydney at 510-525-7610 or visit the Website at bldgeduct.org.

Everyone

Karen Ward of RE Loan Mortgage in Albany is the facilitator for several workshops for the homebuyer. The "Homebuyer Finance" workshop is a review of the overall

loan process and lender guidelines. "Home Buyer Basics" is a workshop for first-time buyers with an overview of all aspects of homebuying. The "Woman To Woman Workshop" educates women on the basic principles of homebuying. Issues and concerns dealing with women are addressed in "woman speak". For dates of upcoming workshops call the Workshop Hotline at 510-718-2134.

BERKELEY

The Berkeley Association of Realtors members are invited to attend "Understanding The 1031 Exchange". Karen Davis of Placer Title offers this course Tuesday, March 9. Make a reservation for this 3 DRE credit class Kdavis@placertitle.com.

WANTED

Bob Valva of Valva Realty invites Oakland real estate brokers to attend the Oakland Realtors Commercial & Industrial Brokers Committee. According to Valva the group was appointed years ago, by the Oakland mayor to facilitate city sales and leasing. The committee's purpose is to help build Oakland. The next meeting is Thursday, March 11, at the OAR Auditorium on Webster. If you would like to attend call Valva at 510-451-7317.

ARPD

The Associated Real Property Brokers (ARPB) presents "The Dynamic Networking Breakfast", from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., Wednesday,

March 17, at Jimmie's Entertainment Complex on San Pablo, in Oakland. Real estate agents are encouraged to bring flyers and market their properties. The meeting is open forum. For more information call Tyrone Cooley of Fidelity National Title at 510-893-8100

e-PRO

The National Association of Re-

altors offers e-PRO, a real estate industry technology certification program for real estate professionals. The e-PRO course was designed by Realtors for Realtors. The course is presented entirely online and certifies real estate agents and brokers as Internet Professionals. Realtors are able to complete their studies at their own pace. If you are interested in learning more visit

www.eProNAR.com.

WHO?

Condolences are in order. Prayers go out to family and friends of Berkeley Realtor Al Jamieson of Northbrae Properties who passed away recently. Jamieson was a member of the Berkeley Association of Realtors.

WHAT?

Someone new at something special? Doing? Changing? Let me know on a seminar? Let me know to lead the world know deadline is two weeks event. Send an email to biereid@mindspire.com or info to me at 510-451-7317





Berkeley, 2600 Etna St. #3
Sun Filled Charm. Spacious one bedroom condo in Berkeley 4-pk. Enjoy vaulted ceilings, hill views, hardwood floors & private balcony. Located on a quiet street near U.C., BART, recreation & shopping.

\$295,000

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Three bedroom, 2 bath Craftsman w/ Bay view! Front porch, stained glass, hardwood floors, living & formal dining rooms w/ box beam ceilings & wainscoting. Downstairs den and bath. Master bedroom w/ sunroom, big kitchen. Recent upgrades include furnace, electric and seismic.

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Open Sunday 2-4
Todd Hodson
559-2915



Oakland, 250 Whitmore #316
Rockridge! Great, sunny two bedroom condominium on top floor! Updated south-facing balcony. Walk to College, restaurants, BART. Quiet street.

\$249,000

Open Sunday 2-4
Tom Modic


1577 Solano Ave., Berkeley (510) 527-2700

7502 Fairmont Ave., El Cerrito (510) 527-9111

289 Arlington Ave., Kensington (510) 524-0800

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COMPANY	Loan Product Rate/Points APR/Lock	Loan Product Rate/Points APR/Lock	Loan Product Rate/Points APR/Lock	Loan Product Rate/Points APR/Lock	COMMENTS
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financial tips for women

PAC STEAGALL-ROSS

WOMEN'S INVESTMENT ADVISORS INC.
 ...women earn 76 percent of what men earn in the workplace. Because women live longer, they need to have more money to support their children, their earnings are lower, and they have less time to accumulate wealth.

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Take control. Despite the stereotypes, studies show that most married women actively participate or take the leading role in managing family finances. Moreover, women outnumber men in participation in investment clubs across America.

However, some married women still leave the financial decision making to their spouse and may wind up ill equipped to handle their finances if they divorce or outlive their husbands.

Invest more. To make up for discrepancies in retirement benefits, women should consider investing more than their male counterparts.

For example, a woman who takes seven years off from a 40-year career can expect to receive only half the pension benefits of someone with 40 years of uninterrupted services.

The good news is that the U.S. Department of Labor reports that in an economy where the earnings of almost all other groups have remained the same or decreased, earnings of women have increased. Higher earnings for women should mean the potential for more investments.

Know your risk tolerance. Consider how much risk you are willing to take in exchange for the potential to earn higher returns.

Historically, equity investments have provided higher returns over the long term than less-risky investments, such as money markets and short-term bonds, although past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Participate in employer plans. Collect information about the retirement benefits that are available through your employer and actively participate in any plans offered, taking advantage of all possible company matches and tax-deferred contributions.

Do not depend on pensions or Social Security. Fewer years in the work force, fewer years with a single employer and lower pay all may contribute to a lower average pension for female retirees.

Women also tend to receive lower Social Security benefits than men. Benefits are calculated based on a person's highest 35 years of earnings.

If the benefits recipient doesn't have 35 years in the work force, the Social Security Administration will add zero-earnings years to the record to equal 35 years. This will lower the average monthly earnings figure and may significantly lower your benefits.

Get out of debt. Debt is a serious issue for men and women. However, credit counselors report, that women are more likely than men to take the first step toward becoming more disciplined and reducing their debt.

First, understand your spending and reduce spending so you don't continue to add to your debt. Then attack your existing debt by paying off high-rate debt first and if possible

transferring high-rate debt to lower rate credit cards.

Do tax planning. With more female business owners and more single women buying homes and qualifying for mortgage interest and property tax deductions, tax planning is becoming an integral part of women's financial lives.

If possible, always contribute the maximum amount to your IRA and/or 401(k) and maximize your tax deductions.

Keep retirement top of mind. Although women have made many impressive strides toward financial independence, they report having only half as much for retirement as men (\$40,000 in annual retirement income for women vs. \$80,000 for men).

Generally, because women live longer than men, they should save 12 percent of their gross income for retirement, rather than just 10 percent.

Use resources. There is a wealth of helpful information easily accessible on the Web, including sites such as

■ www.womensinvest.about.com,
 ■ www.willage.com/money,
 ■ www.wife.org,
 ■ www.advancingwomen.com,
 ■ www.womansbudget.com,
 ■ www.msmoney.com,
 ■ www.womens-finance.com,
 ■ www.womensleadershipexchange.com,
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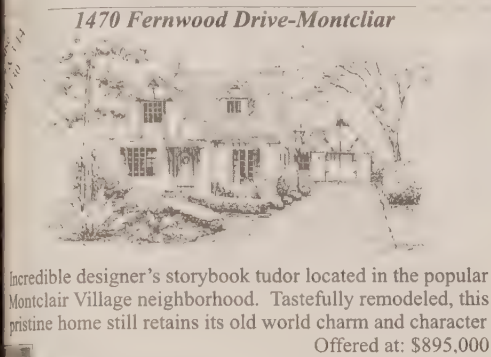
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Is land sale after divorce tax-free?

BY ROBERT J. BRUSS,
ATTORNEY AT LAW

Claudia and Bert were married more than 30 years before their divorce. At the time of their divorce, their total assets were worth well over \$1 million.

Among their assets was the "Happy Valley property" in which they each received a 25 percent in-

terest as part of their divorce settlement. The other 50 percent of the property was held in a trust for the benefit of their children and grandchildren.

The divorce decree provided Claudia with a \$500,000 equalizing money judgment from Bert. But about 10 months after the divorce was final, they decided to sell the Happy Valley property to a developer.

However, just before that sale, Bert transferred his 25 percent interest in the property to Claudia, in return for a credit against the \$500,000 divorce judgment he owed to her. Claudia then signed a deed selling her 50 percent interest in the property to the developer.

When Claudia's income tax returns were prepared, she told her tax preparer that Bert was paying

the capital gain tax on the 25 percent of the property he conveyed to Claudia just before the land sale to the developer.

But, upon IRS audit, the IRS argued it was Claudia who owed the capital gain tax on the land sale because she, not Bert, conveyed the 50 percent interest in the property to the developer.

However, Claudia argued the transfer between Bert and Claudia was tax-free under Internal Revenue Code 1041 as an inter-spousal transfer as part of their divorce so

she shouldn't owe tax on her sale to the developer. But the IRS responded the sale to the developer occurred 10 months after the divorce so it was not tax free under IRC 1041 and Claudia owes the full capital gain tax.

If you were the U.S. tax court judge would you rule Claudia owes capital gain tax on the land sale to the developer?

The judge said yes. Bert's transfer of his 25 percent interest in the land to Claudia was tax-free under Internal Revenue Code 1041 because it was completed within a year after the divorce, the judge began.

However, Claudia's later sale of

the land to the developer as part of the divorce was a capital gain, the judge ruled. "No effect on the agreement between her ex-husband and Happy Valley property to be reported to the IRS," the judge emphasized.

Tax deficiencies of \$8,411 negligence imposed on Claudia properly reported to the IRS on the land sale to the judge ruled.

Based on the Tax Court decision in *Wells Fargo Bank v. Wells Fargo Capital Services, N.A.*, T.C. Memo.

WEEKLY SALES

ALAMEDA

1708 Encinal Av - \$629,000
2147 Encinal Av - \$610,000
1324 Fernside Bl - \$426,000
58 Salmon Rd - \$800,000
2526 Washington Wy - \$480,000
600 Waterfall Isle - \$650,000

ALBANY

701 Buchanan St - \$605,000

664 Key Route Bl - \$731,500
545 Pierce St #1203 - \$330,000

BERKELEY

940 Bancroft Wy - \$420,000
1733 Beverly Pl - \$250,000
3131 College Av - \$550,000
2322 Edwards St - \$550,000
1816 Francisco St - \$550,000
2933 Martin Luther King Jr Wy - \$465,000

1068 Sterling Av - \$472,500

EL CERRITO

710 Elm St - \$515,500
929 Liberty St - \$655,000
1106 Navellier St - \$450,000
1232 Navellier St - \$608,000

EL SOBRANTE

5237 Amend Rd - \$675,000
866 Bridgeway Cr - \$535,000
672 El Centro Rd - \$315,000
361 Joan Vista St - \$210,000
510 Pebble Dr - \$365,000

EMERYVILLE

4 Anchor Dr #F238 - \$210,000
6363 Christie Av #1502 - \$330,000

OAKLAND

1211 104th Av - \$277,000
1736 11th Av - \$325,000
655 12th St #114 - \$339,500

655 12th St #118 - \$350,500
655 12th St #122 - \$334,500
1934 14th Av - \$320,000
2120 19th Av - \$221,000
1074 28th St - \$409,500
2236 38th Av - \$420,000
2257 38th Av - \$263,000
1527 48th Av - \$210,000
935 57th St - \$310,000
1168 60th Av - \$152,500
1441 61st Av - \$468,000
1435 67th Av - \$410,000
2968 68th Av - \$320,000
956 71st Av - \$290,000
1481 73rd Av - \$335,000
1712 73rd Av - \$330,000
1469 77th Av - \$205,000
1306 82nd Av - \$300,000
1024 83rd Av - \$271,000
1210 93rd Av - \$130,000
1442 94th Av - \$240,000
87 Anair Wy - \$310,000
2804 Bartlett St - \$370,000
9233 Birch St - \$515,000
3528 Boston Av - \$300,000

See SALES, Page B15

Women

FROM PAGE B13

Seek help. Meet with a qualified financial advisor to create a financial plan specifically designed to help manage your personal economy.

This information is provided for informational purposes only. The information is intended to be generic in nature and should not be applied or relied upon in any particular sit-

uation without the advice of your tax, legal and/or your financial advisor. The views expressed may not be suitable for every situation.

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Laura C. Steagall-Cissell is a financial advisor with American Express Financial Advisors in Walnut Creek. She can be reached at 925-476-4726.

The GRUBB Co.



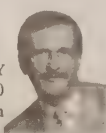
4031 Waterhouse Road, Oakmore

OPEN SUNDAY 2-4:30. This delightful corner traditional home is located close to shops and transportation. Features include a comfortable living room and dining room with fireplace, cheerful kitchen, master bedroom with private deck and peek of the Bay views and a sunny garden with stonework patio and fenced lawn.

Offered at \$525,000



MARY MERRICK
OFFICE: 339.0400/315
mmerrick@grubbco.com



JOHN KARNAY
OFFICE: 339.0400/230
karnay@grubbco.com

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1066 Stannage Avenue, Albany

This truly charming home features 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, dining area, and a sauna in the front yard has an array of roses and the fenced backyard features two large, bountiful lemon trees along with other perennials. Detached garage. Ready for you to move right in!

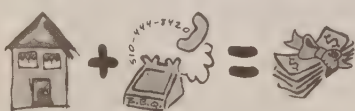
Offered at \$210,000

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1224 Ashmount Av - \$1,626,000
344 Howard Av - \$700,000

RICHMOND

618 20th St - \$242,000
1558 4th St - \$292,000
671 4th St - \$239,000
828 8th St - \$140,000
3620 Barrett Av - \$450,000
215 Berk Pl - \$375,000
211 Chanslor Av - \$583,000
113 Chesley Av - \$175,500
6559 Claremont Av - \$391,000
6818 Del Monte Av - \$360,000
4312 Jenkins Wy - \$233,000
1734 Lincoln Av - \$311,500
1002 Lupine Ct - \$425,000
1004 Lupine Ct - \$460,000
868 McLaughlin St - \$406,000
1207 Melville Sq #314B - \$241,000
2323 Roosevelt Av - \$280,000
4225 Rosewood Av - \$405,000
5125 Solano Av - \$395,000
262 South 12th St - \$272,000
129 South 16th St - \$271,000
636 South 20th St - \$185,000
400 South 23rd St - \$345,000
264 South 42nd St - \$305,000
264 South 6th St - \$299,000
233 Willard Av - \$357,000
450 Wilson Av - \$299,000

SAN LEANDRO

1705 141st Av - \$467,000
1262 Amber Ct - \$530,000
309 Bristol Bl - \$415,500
16716 Cowell St - \$489,000
1500 Darius Ct - \$145,000
14009 Doolittle Dr - \$310,000
1513 Fir Av - \$542,000
1542 Graff Av - \$740,000

15264 Hesperian Bl - \$320,000
555 Joaquin Av - \$320,000
835 Maud Av - \$473,000
1201 Oakes Bl - \$450,000
125 Pershing Dr - \$410,000
2227 Raven Ct - \$395,000
16701 Rolando Av - \$410,000
1575 Vining Dr - \$438,000
14960 Western Av - \$393,000

SAN LORENZO

16239 Ashland Av - \$392,000
499 Crespi Pl - \$389,500
505 Crespi Pl - \$372,000
523 Crespi Pl - \$420,000
529 Crespi Pl - \$410,500
566 Crespi Pl - \$460,000
16631 Cumora Av - \$370,000
1532 Via Lucas - \$495,000

By the numbers

ALAMEDA

TOTAL SALES: 6
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$426,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$800,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$599,167

ALBANY

TOTAL SALES: 3
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$731,500
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$731,500
MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$605,500
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$555,500

BERKELEY

TOTAL SALES: 7
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$250,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$550,000

MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$472,500
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$465,357

EL CERRITO

TOTAL SALES: 4
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$450,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$655,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$557,125

EL SOBRANTE

TOTAL SALES: 5
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$210,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$675,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$365,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$420,000

EMERYVILLE

TOTAL SALES: 2
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$210,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$330,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$270,000

OAKLAND

TOTAL SALES: 63
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$120,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$6,750,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$335,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$492,000

PIEDMONT

TOTAL SALES: 2
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$700,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,626,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$1,163,000

RICHMOND

TOTAL SALES: 27

LOWEST AMOUNT: \$140,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$583,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$305,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$323,593

MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$415,500
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$426,324

SAN LORENZO

TOTAL SALES: 8
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$370,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$495,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$413,625

Awesome Mediterranean!
Fernside District!
3110 Bayo Vista
Huge elegant rooms. 4+ bedrooms, 3 baths. Original wood. Stunning remodel. Chef's kitchen with Wolf range, 2 sinks, 2 dishwashers. \$969,000

Fabulous Bay Front Home
Spectacular Views!
307 Creedon Circle
HUGE lot with tile patio and sweeping lawns. 4 bedrooms, 4 baths, awesome "great room" style kitchen/family room with gourmet kitchen and opulent decor. Formal dining room, bonus room, and large master suite with retreat, fireplace, and balcony with SF views. Bed and bath on ground floor. Three car garage. \$2,300,000

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71 Dudley Avenue, Piedmont
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*4.806% estimated annual percentage rate is based on \$333,700 loan amount. Applicable closing costs will apply. Loan term is for 15 years and is subject to maximum loan-to-value of 80%. Estimated payment on maximum conforming loan amount of \$333,700 is approximately \$2,617. Minimum loan amount \$100,000. Homeowners insurance is required.
**5.644% estimated annual percentage rate is based on \$333,700 loan amount. Applicable closing costs will apply. Loan term is for 30 years. Estimated payment on maximum conforming loan amount of \$333,700 is approximately \$3,121. Minimum loan amount \$100,000. Homeowners insurance is required.
***4.181% estimated annual percentage rate is based on \$500,000 loan amount. Applicable closing costs will apply. 5/1 Adjustable Rate Mortgage is subject to 5% interest rate caps and then adjusts to market rate every year thereafter. Estimated payment is \$2,533. Homeowners insurance is required.

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\$1,790,000
Mont Hills. Fabulous new Spanish Mediterranean, remarkable quality custom floors and Alder cabinets throughout. One to see this one.
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OPEN 2-4:30

4633 GERANIUM
\$552,000
Oakland. Nice family home above 580. Oakland's best schools. Remodeled kitchen and half bath. Fireplace, bonus room in backyard. Three bedroom, one and half bathrooms. Michael or Judy 531-7000x251

BY APPOINTMENT

COLONIAL
\$875,000
Montclair. Approximately 2265 interior sq. ft this 3BD/3BA w/full family room, & kitchen sits on approximately 12,600 sq. ft. useable lot. Amenities include double paned windows, two fireplaces, random plank hardwood floors, tile kitchens & baths, seismic upgrades, electrical & plumbing upgrades. Four car parking. Frank Hennefer 531-7000x235

INCOME PROPERTIES

17 UNIT BUILDING
\$1,390,000
Oakland. Four studios, eleven-one bedroom, two-two bedrooms. New roof, many upgrades. Attractively priced to sell. Catherine Vallee 531-7006x258

7 UNIT BUILDING
\$879,000
Laurel. Good income! Six 1BD and one 2BD. Two units have newly renovated baths. Conveniently located near MacArthur Blvd. and 35th Avenue. Judy Vinton 531-7006x215

MIXED UNITS
\$795,000
Oakland. Four 1BD residential units over two commercial storefronts. Five parking spaces off street. Perfect live-work setup. Foundation, electrical roof, plumbing has been redone. Near International Blvd. & 14th Avenue. Frank Hennefer 531-7006x235

4 UNIT BUILDING
\$594,000
Melrose. Nice four units in good area. Two-two bedrooms, two-one bedrooms. Large backyard. New electrical service upgrades. Michael Childress 531-7000x215

LAND

DROP DEAD VIEW LOT
\$295,000
Ready to build 1/3 acre. Looking out to canyon and hills with potential San Francisco & Bay view. Easy access downslope. Plans in process owner/builder motivated to build your dream!
Heidi Kearsley 531-7000 x295

ADORABLE STARTER
\$354,950
Oakland. Make this adorable two bedroom, one bath bungalow your very own! Bay views make this house special. Hardwood floors in living room, dining room and bedrooms. Vinyl in kitchen and laundry, spacious backyard, detached garage and off street parking. Carol Robbiano 531-7000x295

THE FINEST LOFT LIVING
\$595,000
Jack London Square. Experience the ultimate in loft living! Spacious 1850 sq. ft. rare corner unit, full of light, luxuriously upgraded. One bedroom, one bath, with flexible floor plan. Tracy Butler 531-7000x232

ELVERT DRIVE
\$1,450,000
Magnificent New Mediterranean! Panoramic Bay view. Four bedrooms, and four plus bathrooms. Media room, and spacious decks. 531-7000x248

3121 RAWSON
\$349,900
Maxwell Park. Sunny and inviting 2BD/1BA! Spacious living room with original tile fireplace and S. bay view, gorgeous refinished hardwood floors, eat-in kitchen and spacious formal dining room, wonderful large private yard-a gardener's paradise! Kate Phillips 531-7000x228

538 LINCOLN AVENUE
\$505,000
Alameda. Absolutely yummy! Classic 20's home with addition. Three bedrooms, two baths, family room, formal dining room, cook's kitchen. Delightful rainbow colors. Lovely landscaped yard. Stan Hammond 531-7000x246

Weekend OPEN HOMES

Open Sunday, unless otherwise indicated

www.hillspapers.com

Alameda			
\$228,000	965 Shorepoint Ct #211	18D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-814-4813		
Harbor Bay Realty	Richard Kim		
\$229,000	950 Shorepoint Ct #112	18D/1BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-814-4884/814-4832		
Harbor Bay Realty	Izabella Lipetski/Dania A-Morron		
\$259,950	955 Shorepoint Ct #211	18D/1BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-748-1127		
Gallagher & Lindsey	Debra Gorman		
\$325,000	1127 Mound St.	18D/2BA	
Open Sat 2-4	333-8897		
Alameda Realty	Eileen Walker		
\$345,000	965 Shorepoint Ct. #322	28D/2BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-748-1168		
Gallagher & Lindsey	Kirk Knight		
\$399,000	3208 Encinal Ave	18D/1BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-521-8869		
Kane & Associates	Steve Andersen		
\$434,500	1040 Jost Ln	28D/2BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-814-4847		
Harbor Bay Realty	Chuck Bianchi		
\$459,500	1046 Marianas Ln	38D/2.5BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-814-4841		
Harbor Bay Realty	Tom Young		
\$465,000	28 Invincible Court	28D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-331-0963		
Kane & Associates	Wendy Sanda		
\$475,000	933 Shoreline Dr. #403	28D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-748-1116/748-1135		
Gallagher & Lindsey	Alice Garvin/Sylvia Rampf		
\$485,000	3337 Solomon Ln	48D/2.5BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-814-4819		
Harbor Bay Realty	Nancy Evans-Bianchi		
\$489,000	1819 Elm St.	2+8D/1BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-864-2024/483-1676		
Kane & Associates	David G./Krystyna N.		
\$505,000	538 Lincoln Avenue	38D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	531-7000x246		
Wells & Bennett Realtors	Stan Hammond		
\$518,000	1626 Broadway	28D/1BA	
Open Sat 2-4	510-337-9413		
Kane & Associates	Alan Lertzman		
\$530,000	2500 San Jose Av	28D/1.5BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-814-4823		
Harbor Bay Realty	Nancy Brandt		
\$555,000	320 Fair Haven	3+8D	
Open Sun 2-4	510-521-1508/521-1647		
BaySide Real Estate	Colleen McFerrin/Quinn Stone		
\$599,500	311 Laguna Vista	2+8D/2BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-917-1617		
Gallagher & Lindsey	Bill Bissett		
\$609,000	35 Britt	38D/2.5BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-814-4823		
Harbor Bay Realty	Darin Vinali		
\$635,000	1819 Cambridge Dr	38D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-522-4449		
Gallagher & Lindsey	Keiko McDonah		
\$639,000	2916 Fillmore St	38D/2BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-910-1443/523-7214		
Kane & Associates	Uli LiRosi/Valerie Newman		
\$699,000	120 Hudson Bay	38D/3BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-814-4848/814-4839		
Harbor Bay Realty	Ringo Liu/Bill Douglas		
\$888,000	38 Salmon Rd	58D/3BA	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-814-4892/814-4848		
Harbor Bay Realty	Eunice Edwards/Ringo Liu		
\$969,000	3110 Bayo Vista Av	48D/3BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-814-4880		
Harbor Bay Realty	Maureen Shandolip		
\$975,000	452 Santa Clara Ave	4 units	
Open Sat & Sun 2-4	510-748-1807		
Gallagher & Lindsey	Ann Bracci		
\$1,250,000	1253 Hawthorne	48D/3.5BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-522-7173		
Harbor Bay Realty	George Williams		

Albany

\$449,000	1049 Pomona Ave	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-524-9888x33		
Berkeley Hills Realty	Bill and Tracy		

Berkeley

\$295,000	2600 Etna St #3	18D/1BA	
Open Sun 1-4	510-527-2700 X23		
Marvin Gardens	Stina Charles-Harris		

\$329,000	3223 Boise St	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-5	510-845-4211		
Prudential Ca Realty	Daisy Tan		

\$335,000	1214 Parker St	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-834-2010		
Prudential Ca Realty	Irma Baldrige		

\$410,000	1627 Russell St	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-280-2121		
Red Oak Realty	The Lederes		

Berkeley

\$424,000	1429 Channing St	38D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-5	510-280-2139		
Red Oak Realty	Diane Ohlsson		

\$449,000	1033 Alliston Way	38D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-339-8900		
C21 Heritage Real Estate	Victor Fierro		

\$449,000	3026 Stauton St	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-508-8612		
Homes of Merit	Ollie Young		

\$475,000	3045 Deakin Street	38D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-652-2133		
The Grubb Co.	Bebe McRae		

\$485,000	919 Page Street	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-339-0400		
The Grubb Co.	Nacio Brown		

\$580,000	1117 Hearst Ave	3+4+4/2BA	
Open Sun 2-5	510-845-0211		
Prudential Ca Realty	Debra Alber		

\$599,500	8 Hopkins Court	38D/1+BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-339-0400		
The Grubb Co.	Chris Cohen		

\$775,000	1874 San Juan Avenue	3+8D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-338-1346		
Pacific Union GMAC RE	Joanna Gould		

\$899,000	1275 Campus Dr	48D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-428-0900		
Prudential Ca Realty	Tom Kilgallen		

\$2,200,000	6807 Buckingham Blvd.	58D/4+BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-339-0400		
The Grubb Co.	Ronald Sterling Eggherman		

El Cerrito

\$310,000	1751 Liberty #201	28D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-501-2510		
Security Pacific R.E.	Phyllis Bettencourt		

\$325,000	1751 Liberty #301	28D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-734-1741		
Security Pacific R.E.	Pam Garbarino		

\$398,000	850 Liberty St	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-524-9888x51		
Berkeley Hills Realty	Gay and Kay		

\$480,000	6818 Snowdon	38D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-232-0281		
Coldwell Banker Bartels	Joanne Yu		

\$699,000	2610 Francisco Way	38D/2+BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-339-1369		
SAT/SUN 1:30-4:30	Hills Mini Estate		

\$924,950	239 Willamette	38D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-237-0371		
Coldwell Banker Bartels	Franca Taliercio		

El Sobrante

\$375,000	4714 Canyon Rd	38D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-292-3040		
Marvin Gardens	Darrell Hoh		

Emeryville

\$439,000	1012 47th St	2+8D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-339-0400		
Better Homes Realty	Lila Owens		

\$475,000	1020-22 44th Street	Duplex	
Open Sun 1-4pm	2 Units 28D/1BA ea		
Regency California Realty	Anne		

Fremont

\$280,000	4637 Virio Common	28D/1.5BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-814-4891		
Harbor Bay Realty	George Muhr		

Kensington

\$570,000	76 Norwood Ave	28D/1BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-527-0211		
Millstein & Associates	Celia Concus		

\$698,000	172 Ardmore Ave	38D/2BA	
Open Sun 2-4	510-559-2915		
Marvin Gardens	Todd Hodson		

Lafayette

\$2,100,000	1490 Rancho View Dr.	58D/5.5	
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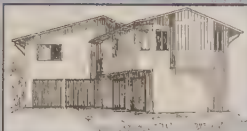


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SPORTS

• Friday, March 5, 2004 •

Section C

Berkeley wins in overtime to take first NCS soccer title

Leary scores the winner, he and Hill get the championship victory over Washington.

By Phil Jensen
STAFF WRITER
BERKELEY — Berkeley High boys soccer player John O'Leary was relaxed. He was relaxed that he came off the bench Saturday after missing the Yellow Jackets' first two games with a collar injury. Never mind that he was deadlocked with Washington in overtime of the North Coast Section 3A championship game. "I was just 'boom,'" said

PREP BOYS SOCCER

the senior midfielder. O'Leary sent a ricochet into the Huskies' net just 37 seconds into the first 10-minute overtime period. The Yellow Jackets scored two more overtime goals, including another one by O'Leary, in a 4-1 victory that clinched Berkeley its first NCS boys soccer title ever. "I can't think of a better thing to end my senior year," said Berkeley star Kamani Hill, who scored two goals and had an assist in the victory. "This year, it's all about the team." Berkeley (22-7) entered the postseason as a big question mark. With two Alameda Contra Costa Athletic League games remaining, the Yellow Jackets had

sanctions imposed both by Berkeley High and the ACCAL Board of Managers after it was determined that the Yellow Jackets were scheduled to play 26 games in the regular season, two more than is allowed by NCS bylaws. Berkeley forfeited its final two league matches, and a school-imposed sanction was a suspension of coach Janu Juarez for the remainder of the season. But Hill gave a convincing presentation at the NCS 3A all-league and seeding meeting, and Berkeley was given the first at-large berth. The Yellow Jackets, who were seeded sixth, proved they were up to the challenge by upsetting No. 3 Amador Valley 3-1 in the quarterfinals and No. 2 De La Salle 2-1 in a shootout in the semifinals. "They really came together as

a team. They were really happy to try (to win it all)," Berkeley coach Felipe Martinez said. Hill opened the scoring Saturday at the 12:11 mark when he blew past defenders on a short run and sent a low bullet into the right side of the net. But Washington, the No. 9 seed, tied the score when Jamil Roberts pounded a loose ball into the Berkeley net at 27:55. The Huskies (16-7-3) outshot Berkeley 24-18 in the game, but Yellow Jackets goalkeeper Peter Catalfo was outstanding with 15 saves. "After they got the goal back, I just knew it would have to be up to me to keep us in the game," Catalfo said. After O'Leary's goal put



KAMANI HILL, center, drives through the De La Salle defense in last week's NCS semifinal. Hill had two goals in the final vs. Washington.

AL NOTEBOOK

Goalie marks Berkeley

By Phil Jensen
STAFF WRITER
Catalfo might have been overwhelmed amid the hoopla surrounding Berkeley High School's North Coast Section boys soccer title was the outplay of Yellow Jackets goalkeeper Peter Catalfo in the semifinals and finals. He made only two goals total in those two games. He made nine saves in a 3-1 win over Amador Valley in the semifinals, Berkeley's first game tournament. Catalfo helped keep the game during the championship of Saturday's championship. Washington outshot Berkeley 5-3 in that half, but he made seven saves and the Huskies scoreless in that half. The Yellow Jackets exploded for three goals in a 4-1 victory. Washington tied the score at 12:11 when Jamil Roberts put a loose ball into the Washington outshot Berkeley 24-18 from that point to the end. The Huskies did not score.

ALACAL, Page 2

AL NOTEBOOK

He mat can't just for boys

By Orlando Molina
STAFF WRITER
Bay Shore Athletic wrestling scene had some representation during last year's North Coast Section tournament at the Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center as 11 schools from Berkeley and Alameda County finished in the top four in their weight classes. Yellow Jackets' Lily Doran won the 120-pound bracket, finishing the table with a 3-0 record and teammate Shekinah Doran took fourth at 235. The Matlions of Albany was the lone female competitor also taking fourth place.

Competing in such a large tournament hoped that girls wrestling will pick up steam, garnering the same respect that boys wrestling has accrued. "I don't want to see people don't respect the top wrestlers are supposed to lose to the girls. It shouldn't happen. But there are girls out there who are going to prove them wrong," she said.

ONE ATTITUDE: Albany's Steven Pressnall earned a berth into the California Interscholastic Federation's BSAL, Page 2

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

No stopping Pilots in playoffs

■ St. Joseph routs St. Mary's and Salesian for the BSAL championship

By Scott Strain
STAFF WRITER
ALAMEDA — The game was summed up best by St. Joseph Notre Dame boys basketball coach Don Lippi. "We didn't give them anything," said the Pilots' first-year coach after St. Joseph (21-6) dismantled St. Mary's (21-7) 79-46 on Feb. 26 in a Bay Shore Athletic League semifinal game. The Pilots went on to defeat Salesian 63-40 to win the BSAL playoff championship last on Saturday night at Albany High School. "Our defense just keeps getting better," said Lippi, whose team has allowed an average of just over 40 points a game in its last 11 contests. "We now could beat some of the teams we lost to earlier in the year." A combination of smothering defense on St. Mary's Larry Gurganious (seven points) and tactical game management assisted the Pilots in their surprisingly big win.

Gurganious had just hit a three-point play to give St. Mary's an early 8-4 lead when Lippi called time. He inserted Don Noble into the game and the senior forward hit two quick baskets, his only ones of the game, to bring the Pilots to within 9-8. Alex Harris (16 points) hit a 3-point shot for 11-9, and that was the last time the Panthers were in hailing distance of the lead. With 11 seconds left in the quarter Harris, on a set play, went one-on-one with Gurganious at the top of the key with the eight players standing near the baseline. With three seconds left, Harris whipped the ball to Jon Mercado on the left wing, and Mercado hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to give the Pilots a 22-12 lead.

St. Joseph extended the lead

See BOYS, Page 2



LARRY GURGANIOUS, left, of St. Mary's defends as Alan Hester of St. Joseph puts up a shot.

PREP WRESTLING

Pressnall advances to state

By Orlando Molina
STAFF WRITER
OAKLAND — Albany High School wrestler Steven Pressnall didn't have much to say after a devastating loss that took him out of contention for first place on first day of the North Coast Section championships at the Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center.

But on Saturday, one day after that huge disappointment, Pressnall had no loss for words after refocusing to take third place, which earned him a trip to the California Interscholastic Federation Championships today and Saturday in Bakersfield. "Yesterday I had a mental loss, but I showed up today," Pressnall said. "I decided I'd wrestle even if I was still disappointed. I didn't think too much. I just wrestled." Indeed he did. He was tied 3-3 against Sonoma Valley's Jake Fay in the final minute of the third round. With 29 seconds left, Pressnall pulled off an escape to take the lead and solidified it with a takedown in the final 10 seconds for a 6-3 victory.

Pressnall made a habit of cutting it close most of the day. Earlier in the fourth round of consolation play, he beat Montgomery-Santa Rosa's Keola Arakaki 4-3 in sudden death overtime on an escape. Then after smacking a 16-0 technical fall on Steve Rodriguez of Washington in the quarterfinals, he squeezed by Hector Sandoval of Ukiah for a 6-5 victory.

"I just wanted to come out on top. It doesn't matter how you get there," Pressnall said. Pressnall was only the first of three Albany survivors from Friday's competition. Kofi Yiadom, a senior at 142, won his opening match of the day with a 4-2 win over Jose Borjorquez of Hayward in the third consolation round.

"I have to go out and wrestle

See WRESTLING, Page 2

Piedmont is up to the challenge

■ Courtney Paris gets 28 points, 20 rebounds as the Highlanders beat St. Mary's for the third time

By Jennifer Starks
STAFF WRITER
ALBANY — As far as Courtney Paris is concerned, the Piedmont High School girls basketball team hasn't seen the last of St. Mary's.

She would like nothing more than to be done with the Panthers, but she knows darn well, with the Division IV North Coast Section playoffs coming up, the odds aren't stacked in her favor. The Highlanders ran into St. Mary's for the third time this season Saturday night. And for the third time, Piedmont came out on the winning end, this time with a 70-46 victory in the Bay Shore Athletic League championship game at Albany High School. Piedmont gets an automatic berth into the NCS play-

offs. They nabbed the top seed at Sunday's seeding meeting. "If it all works out, we'll probably meet up in NCS and NorCal," Courtney said. "I expect to see them two more times. I wouldn't doubt it. Out of all the teams, St. Mary's has what it takes to beat us. I think they're our biggest challenge. They have all these different matchups and can create problems for us. They're all winners, and they work so hard. It's always tough playing them."

Piedmont (27-2) handled the challenge with relative ease this time around, though. While the past two meetings were decided by 10 points or less, this one was never in doubt. The Panthers (20-7) managed to trim the deficit to 36-28 on a basket by Cristina Thomas early in the third quarter, but Courtney Paris responded by scoring five consecutive points to push the Highlanders' lead to 41-28. Courtney was unstoppable in the paint, finishing with a game-

high 28 points, 20 rebounds and three blocks. Her twin sister Ashley also racked up a double-double with her 14-point, 14-rebound effort.

"We were a little flat, and they took advantage of it," St. Mary's co-coach Sean Dulan said. "We weren't able to establish a rhythm. Courtney showed why she is the best player in the country. Bar none. She's 6-foot-4, and you can't move her. She's big and strong and has quick feet. I don't think this is the last time we will play them."

Foul trouble didn't help the Panthers' cause. Senior Nicole Thompson, who is second to on the team in scoring at 12.9 points per game, fouled out with 3:16 left in the third quarter. She finished with just two points. St. Mary's forward Shantrell Sneed scored 12 of her team-high 20 points in the second quarter, but she was limited to just four points in the second half.

See GIRLS, Page 2



ST. MARY'S Christina Johnson, right, manages to draw the foul against Piedmont's Courtney Paris in the BSAL title game.

Yellow Jackets don't forget suspended coach

By Curtis Pashelka

STAFF WRITER

As the Berkeley High School boys soccer team celebrated its first North Coast Section 3A championship on Saturday, Yellow Jackets athletic director Kristin Glenchur waved over Janu Juarez.

She then handed Juarez the championship banner and plaque as the Berkeley fans in attendance started to cheer for the suspended coach after the Yellow Jackets had defeated Washington 4-1 for the NCS title at Berkeley High.

Such a scenario seemed improbable at best a month ago, when Juarez was forced to step down for the remainder of the season as part of self-imposed sanctions by the school.

The Yellow Jackets also had to forfeit their last two regular-season games to remain eligible for the playoffs. And getting into the postseason wasn't necessarily a sure thing.

But the players literally took care of the rest. Berkeley captain Kamani Hill was impeccable in delivering his team's two-minute address at the NCS at-large and seeding meeting on Feb. 15. The Yellow Jackets, as a result, were awarded the first at-large berth and the No. 6 seed for the 3A playoffs.

And that, Juarez said, was all the team needed as it outscored three playoff opponents 9-3 with Felipe Martinez serving as interim coach.

"Whether I was there or not, the team was going to keep on

rolling," Juarez said. "The work had already been done, and (the playoffs were) a culmination of all of that work. Most of the seniors had been on the varsity team since they were sophomores. They're a very experienced team, very savvy."

Juarez said that ironically, the team came together while playing in the West Coast Classic in Irvine Jan. 1-5. The Yellow Jackets played three pool play and two playoff games during the event, and Juarez believed that the two playoff games would not count toward his team's overall record.

They did, and that eventually led to the sanctions. But in the first playoff game of that tournament, against Damien-La Verne, Berkeley played some of its most inspired soccer of the season.

Without forwards Hill and John O'Leary, the Yellow Jackets battled the defending Southern Section champions before losing 2-1.

"That's when this team found its identity," Juarez said.

There may not be another season like this one for Berkeley, which will lose 12 of 22 players to graduation. But Juarez, who will re-apply for the job in the summer, said getting a group of kids who got along as well as this season's team did may be just as difficult as replacing the talent.

"The chemistry on the team is fabulous. They're really tight," Juarez said. "I know they won't say it because they're boys, but they love each other."

Wrestling

FROM PAGE 1

my hardest for my team. I'm representing myself and the school," he said. "If I wrestle my hardest, there's no way I should lose."

His day came to an end in the next round when Cameron Smith of Northgate handed Yiadom a 3-1 loss.

Despite the defeat, Yiadom took solace in knowing that his performance this year exceeded that of last year's tournament, when he lasted until the third consolation round. In addition, one of his goals was to exceed his older brother Yaw Yiadom, who he said collected three NCS match victories. Kofi has five.

Mike Grossman at 173 lasted as far as the fourth consolation round before Orin Goldsby of Ferndale sent him packing with a 9-1 loss.

The Cougars were also represented in the girls all-comers competition by Maia Matalon, the No. 4 seed at 138. Matalon, a freshman, finished fourth. She opened her day against Stephanie Montez of Arroyo. Matalon showed good resilience after falling 6-5 midway through the third round. She then turned her fortunes around with a quick reversal and then a pin of Montez at 5:41.

"I didn't start out too well so I tried to use a different technique," Matalon said.

She then lost to Estella Pino of San Leandro by pin in 26 seconds and then to Tesia Blonski of Arroyo by pin at 3:23 in the third-place match.

Not to be outdone, Berkeley's Lily Dorman (120) won her bracket at 120. She took all three of her matches, which was capped off with a win over

Kristina Koenning of Novato 9-0.

Over at the Berkeley boys camp, the Yellow Jackets saw Carlo Cornejo end his medal run with a 5-4 loss to De La Salle's Nate Spangler.

Cornejo started out in good shape with a 2-0 lead after one round. But Cornejo opened the door for Spangler in the second when a hard takedown of Spangler was called an illegal slam, resulting in a penalty point. Spangler tied the match at 4 in the middle of the third and took the lead for good on an escape in the final 30 seconds for a 5-4 loss.

"I did everything I could and did everything right. There were just some questionable calls," Cornejo said. "I felt I was the better wrestler, but he wrestled a smart match. I guess you have to beat the referees and the wrestler. I'm pretty disappointed I didn't make it to state. Life goes on and I can go gain some weight now."

Cornejo impresses on Friday: Cornejo isn't much for mixing words. He's looking for a little respect, and he may have earned some Friday after an impressive performance at the NCS Tournament.

Cornejo, the No. 7 seed at 127 pounds, turned a few heads as he won his first two matches.

He opened with a 7-1 decision over T-Jay Zanotti of Arcata then beat Haseeb Sadat of Castro Valley 5-2.

His luck ran out, however, against No. 2 seed Andrew Rogers of Healdsburg, resulting in a 5-2 loss.

"It was a close match. He got a couple of back points off me, but overall I'm satisfied," Cornejo, a senior, said. "We have something to prove. They don't give Berkeley wrestling a lot of

respect, so I have to prove that I can hang with anyone."

Yellow Jackets coach Brad It-sukazu, on the other hand, wasn't concerned with outside opinions. When asked if he agreed with Cornejo's desire for respect, he said, "I don't give a (expletive) what anybody thinks (of Berkeley). That's (Cornejo). You asked me what I think."

Despite the loss, Cornejo advanced to the second day of competition.

He wasn't alone. Sam Hammer-Nahman, at 147, also qualified for Saturday. He lost his opening match to Emanuel Hernandez of St. Helena by pin at 4:38, but righted the ship with a win over Aaron Fore of Healdsburg in the first consolation round. He followed with an overtime pin of James Logan's Mandep Singh at 6:16.

The day did not end without some controversy.

Pressnall of Albany, a favorite and No. 1 seed at 137, was unceremoniously shown the door to the consolation bracket following a narrow 5-4 loss to Rene Lopez of St. Helena.

The match started quietly with both wrestlers grinding to a 1-1 tie after one round. But things picked up as Lopez rang off three consecutive points for a 4-1 lead. A quick escape from Pressnall as time wound down in the second cut the lead in half.

Lopez pushed the score to 5-3 midway through the final round when Pressnall attempted a comeback in the final minute. From the down position, Pressnall appeared to make several escapes and a take down before falling out of bounds each time, but the referee didn't see it that way.

Pressnall made one successful escape and scored on a stall call on Lopez, but it wasn't

enough.

Pressnall declined and Cougars coach son, after a cooling-off period, chose his words carefully.

"It's disappointing," smiling. "The kids, I hope he can put it behind him. He usually can win. He has to focus. He still has a chance, headed and will learn."

Other Albany athletes included Yiadom (147) and man (173).

Yiadom advanced Chappel of Liberty dropped his second round to Brendan Demy Marin-Novato 7-5, covered and beat Pin of Terra Linda 4-2 in consolation round.

Grossman mirrored with a win over John Thompson of La Linda. He then returned to the second round at 4:30 to Beau Santa Rosa's Andy.

Skinner out: Skinner was scratched from NCS tournament because of an injured shoulder.

Cougars' senior Skinner (137) was injured in his championship of the Bay Shore Athletic Tournament two weeks ended up winning the complained of pain in

"He said it popped, and it never healed," said. "He gutted it in BSAL (tournament) but bothering him for

Banksom added the doctor advised him to pete. Skinner made it to pull out of the tournament Tuesday.

Soccer

FROM PAGE 1

Berkeley ahead, the Yellow Jackets scored two goals late in the second 10-minute overtime period. With Washington goalkeeper Jay Data out near midfield, Hill controlled a loose ball and beat Data back to the net for a goal. O'Leary also later scored on a breakaway goal after a pass from Hill.

Berkeley 2, De La Salle 1: Yellow Jackets outscored the Spartans 4-2 in penalty kicks on Feb. 26 in Berkeley to advance to the NCS 3A championship.

Jesse Guerrero scored the decisive goal, going to the right of Spartans goalkeeper Matt Ellis. Hill, Walker Toma and Edgar Hernandez also scored for Berkeley.

James Brown and Andrew Roth scored penalty kicks for the defending NCS champion Spartans.

Berkeley had two chances to take the lead in the first 10-minute overtime.

In the 85th minute, after a corner kick was bounced around the De La Salle box, the ball came to Hernandez. But his low shot with De La Salle goalkeeper Matt Ellis out of position was saved by defender Brown, who was standing on the goal line.

De La Salle had the first scoring opportunity in the second 10-minute overtime. Jon Piermattei let a free kick go from 21 yards out, that Berkeley goalkeeper Catalfo needed to stretch over his head to grab.

Berkeley's best chance in the

second overtime came after Toma took control of the ball on the right side of the De La Salle net. After alluding two defenders though, Toma's shot to the short side went wide of the net.

De La Salle's best chance to go in the golden-goal portion of overtime came in the 109th minute. Brown's shot went right to Nick Fitzpatrick, who was stationed to the right of the net, but his header was saved by Catalfo.

Two minutes later, Hernandez had another shot but his shot from 20 yards out was saved by Ellis.

The Yellow Jackets had been stifled most of the game, but Harris Cohn helped change that in the 68th minute.

Cohn took a throw-in from the side from Toma, leapt over the Spartans defense, and flicked the ball into the net. Up until that point, Berkeley had managed only four shots on net.

De La Salle's defense kept Hill, the 2003 Times Player of the Year, to without a shot for the first three-quarters of the game.

Hill had two shots late in the second half but both went wide of the net.

De La Salle took the lead in the 16th minute as Mike Madden took a shot from 30 yards. Yellow Jackets goalkeeper Catalfo made the initial save but couldn't keep a grip on the rain-slicked ball.

Vince DiCicco was there to pick up the loose ball, scoring in the open net.

Times staff writer Curtis Pashelka contributed to this roundup.

this season, and plays in a league that has only two other Division III teams (De Anza and Encinal). The Gauchos were the No. 7 seed in the NCS Division III playoffs and fell 59-52 to Analy in the first round of playoff action Tuesday.

PERFORMANCE OF THE WEEK: Tim Pierce, Hercules boys basketball — Pierce ended his high school career in spectacular fashion during three Titans victories. The 6-foot-7 senior started last week with a school single-game scoring record of 50 points in an 89-71 win over Alameda, then had 40 points and 13 rebounds in Hercules' 87-75 victory over Pinole Valley. He finished last week with 47 points in the Titans' 105-58 win over Encinal.

Girls

FROM PAGE 1

ACCAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Berkeley 54, El Cerrito 22: Berkeley coach Gene Nakamura said, "We're not really a zone team."

He may want to reconsider his postgame statement after Berkeley put on a defensive clinic throttling El Cerrito.

The Yellow Jackets earned an automatic berth to the North Coast Section Division I playoffs by stopping the Gauchos starters cold in a one-game Alameda Contra Costa Athletic League playoff. None of the El Cerrito starting five scored a basket all night.

The Gauchos (20-7) did not score a field goal until 1:20 remained in the second quarter. By that time, Berkeley had a 24-8 lead, which they would add on to every quarter the rest of the way.

It was a ferocious 2-3 zone that made the difference.

"When we played them before (a 54-43 victory two weeks back), we knew that their guards were faster than ours," Nakamura said. "So we figured that if we played them in zone, they'd have to beat us from the outside, and tonight they just couldn't do it."

Berkeley (18-9) used sparkling

play from its guards to lead a well-balanced attack.

Only one Yellow Jacket, senior guard Joy White, had more than 10 points. But her teammates were consistently able to get the ball inside for easy baskets.

Nothing came easy for El Cerrito, whose top scorer Jordan McCormick sat out with an ankle injury.

Nakamura said the absence of Gauchos' senior star certainly helped his team, adding that it might have helped El Cerrito in the long run, as well.

"No question about it," he said. "I think (El Cerrito coach) Ron Williams was right to rest her. Those kids are going to the North Coast Section playoffs as well. This was a game that they needed more to get everyone healthy."

Berkeley does not compete in the Alameda Contra Costa Athletic League's regular season because it has "competitive anomaly" status.

El Cerrito, co-champions of the ACCAL regular season with Pinole Valley, had only three players score, with Chazny Morris and Shonetta Crain-Williams getting all but two of the Gauchos' points.

Staff writer Kibby Kleiman contributed to this story.

Boys

FROM PAGE 1

to 43-27 at the half. Jordan Thurston, who had eight points in the period, hit a 3-point shot at the buzzer to cut the lead to 16 points and give the Panthers some slender hope.

Thurston, who led St. Mary's with 16 points, hit two baskets to cut the lead to 53-39 early in the third quarter. Lippi again called timeout. The Pilots' big men, Ron Lewis and Joe Mitchell, got loose inside for 10 points in the quarter, and Lewis' tip-in with three seconds left gave St. Joseph a 59-39 lead at the end of the third quarter. Four of the baskets came

off offensive rebounds.

"Coach (Lippi) said they don't box out in the middle so when a shot goes up, just follow it in," Mitchell said.

St. Mary's could score only seven points in the fourth quarter. Gurganious was scoreless in the second half.

"We couldn't penetrate and we didn't shoot well," Thurston said. "We didn't play very well."

Please recycle this newspaper

BSAL

FROM PAGE 1

scholastic Federation Championship after an emotional two days in the NCS tournament.

The senior's efforts were well rewarded as he took third place at 137.

"As a freshman I got to watch seniors go to state and I looked up to them, it was like they were godlike or something," Pressnall said.

When asked if he himself felt godlike, he said, "No, but it feels really good."

AN INDIAN FIRST: Although John Swett wrestler Anthony Wilson didn't place at the NCS tournament, Indians coach Sid Jensen said his 2-2 tournament record made Wilson the school's only wrestler to win two NCS matches.

Wilson started the day with a loss before winning back-t-back matches in the consolation bracket including a 12-7 victory over Phil Mishaga of Foothill in the first round.

FEELING BETTER: Salesian girls soccer player Andrea Sal-

vador got some good news last week as an MRI determined she had suffered bad ligament tears previously thought to be minor.

Salvador injured her knee during a 2-0 loss to El Cerrito Feb. 18 when she fell on three times. She played the pain, but was standing the next day.

She said her doctor believed her ligaments were and suspected that she was anywhere from a month to a year away from playing. But the MRI on Feb. 25 showed otherwise.

Salvador said she moved the brace and was on crutches.



ACCAL

FROM PAGE 1

Sunday with a scheduling dilemma for next season.

"Do I toughen (my team) up to play Berkeley, Pinole, Richmond, Hercules night in and night out or do I play Division III teams who do not quite play to that caliber? Do I play a pre-season of Division III teams to prepare myself for the playoffs? On the other hand, if I do not play Division III opponents, I will be lower in the pack (at the Division III seeding meeting)," Keys said Wednesday.

El Cerrito had a 5-2 record against Division III opponents

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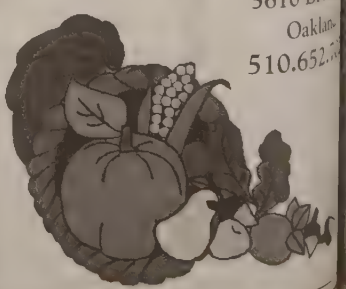
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PLAYING

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"THE ROSES": Meg Ryan plays a classy Cleveland, been around boxers and doubts she can be the club of who she meets Luther (Ryan), who's not a real boxer, tough, and sniffs tonight's workout; more a perfectly good decision. — R. Moore. (PG-13: language, violence, sexual content and drug material.) 1 hour, 51 minutes. B

"COMING POLLY": Ben Stiller, who has a bad time in a bathroom, grossed out, but who has agony. He also gets his new wife (Debra Messing) of with a subconscious honey moon, but he lives with a fake named Polly (Aniston). They're completely into each other, but the movie tries to convince us of their founders in the attempt. As adorable as usual, but the applied by writer/director, who co-authored the "Meet the Parents," isn't enough for her. In contrast, Hamden bathroom humor seems a match for Stiller's limitations. (PG-13: sexual content, language, violence, and drug material.) 1 hour, 30 minutes. C+

"BARBARIAN INVASIONS": An economic drama about a man making sense of one's life director Denys Arcand's making wit. Much of the comes from Remy (Hardy), a symbiotic professor dying of an unnamed a hellishly overcrowded hospital. Remy rails against

OPENING TODAY

"HIDALGO" (PG-13)
Viggo Mortensen stars in this action-adventure about a cowboy who competes in a race across the Arabian Desert.
"MONSIEUR IBRAHIM" (NR)
A young Jew and an elderly Muslim (Omar Sharif) strike up a friendship in Paris in the '60s. In French with subtitles.
"RED BETSY" (PG)
A close-knit Midwestern family struggles with loss, change and

an ex-wife; he seethes about humanity; but most of all, he is at his wit's end about his son Sebastian (Stephane Rousseau). This Cannes prize-winner is the sequel to Arcand's "The Decline of the American Empire." — K. Turan. (R: language, sexual dialogue and drug content.) 1 hour, 39 minutes. B+

"BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS": In this sequel to 2002's amiable yet somehow incendiary workplace comedy, economic politics play a much bigger role. Happily resigned to keeping his father's place a going concern, Calvin (Ice Cube) is initially pleased to see a shiny new mini-mall go up across the street. But when the mall's anchor store turns out to be a state-of-the-art chain styling emporium, he and the gang realize they're in a fight for survival. The focus, quite rightly, is on Calvin and Cedric the Entertainer's Eddie. Constantly engaged and intelligent, this sequel is anything but business as usual. — B. Strauss. (PG-13: language, violence.) 1 hour, 38 minutes. B

"BIG FISH": The mawkish soul of a male "Beaches," Tim Burton's quirky style and an ending sure to prompt tears, but mostly it's a father-son tale (Albert Finney and Billy Crudup) told in flashback as the dad recounts his tall tales. Ewan McGregor stars in those highly stylized scenes. Well-crafted, but ultimately curiously hollow. — M. Pols. (PG-13: light scene, some nude images, a suggestive reference.) 1 hour, 50 minutes. B-

"BLIND SHAFT": This compelling no-frills drama tours the lower depths of China's booming market economy with a character study of two amoral sharks doing all they can — including murder — to survive. Human decency does occasionally raise its head, and is all the more touching for its randomness. Big surprise: The government of China has banned this film. — T. Burr. (Not rated: violence, sexual situations, brief nudity; in Mandarin

social progress during the 1940s.
"RED TROUSERS" (NR)
Fuses documentary and fiction, set inside the Peking Opera School, where Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan honed their martial arts skills.
"STARSKY & HUTCH" (PG-13)
Based on the popular old television show about a charismatic crime-fighting duo, played by Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson.

Chinese with English subtitles.) 1 hour, 32 minutes. B

"BROKEN LIZARD'S CLUB DREAD": Loud, boorish, cheesy filmmaking at its worst. This splatter-genre spoof aims for humor and horror, but achieves neither. The story takes place on Coconut Pete's Pleasure Island as a new boatload of young, boozily bodied bodies arrives for sex, drugs and more sex. An unstoppable slasher immediately begins to prey on the resort's employees, lopping off heads and skewering torsos. — D. Germain. (R: violence, gore, sexual content, language, drug use.) 1 hour, 43 minutes. D+

"THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT": What's sleazy, features the untalented Ashton Kutcher and isn't a supermarket tabloid? This awful movie, about a college student who travels back in time through gloriously easy means to try to fix the traumas of his youth. Mostly he wants to save his childhood sweetheart (Amy Smart). Every time he goes back, he seems to make things worse. The movie displays an unhealthy interest in animal torture and kiddie porn. Kutcher should stick to comedy. — M. Pols. (R: violence, sexual content, language and brief drug use.) 1 hour, 53 minutes. D+

"CALENDAR GIRLS": This chick-flick variant on "The Full Monty" is pat, contrived and entirely predictable. The comedy takes a true story about a women's club that disrobed for charity and turns it into a briefly disarming farce about friendship, celebrity and latent exhibitionism. Helen Mirren and Julie Walters head the good-sport ensemble, as the rebel members of Rylstone Women's Institute, a national club that raises money through bake-offs and calendar sales. — G. Lovell. (PG-13: slight profanity, peek-a-boo nudity.) 1 hour, 48 minutes. C

"CATCH THAT KID": Twelve-year-old Maddy enlists two friends, Gus the mechanic and Austin the computer

geek, to help her steal money to pay for her father's (Sam Robard's) operation. Where? From the bank where her mom (Jennifer Beals) happened to have designed the purportedly impregnable vault. Sounds like the makings of a delightful little movie, but director Bart Freundlich's pacing is lifeless and crude. — C. Lemire. (PG: some language, thematic elements and crude humor.) 1 hour, 32 minutes. D+

"COLD MOUNTAIN": Early buzz made it sound like a romance, but Anthony Minghella's ("The Talented Mr. Ripley") film is more a Civil War story, about the resilience of the American spirit and love of home. Based on the best-selling novel, it stars Jude Law as a war deserter slogging his way back to his lady love (Nicole Kidman), a well-bred Southern flower ill-equipped to survive. Renee Zellweger steals the show as a spitfire who helps save the day. — M. Pols. (R: violence, sexuality.) 2 hours, 33 minutes. B

"CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN": Despite earnest performances from Lindsay Lohan and her teen co-stars, a painfully unfunny affair dolled up with hip fashions and a large music budget. Lohan plays Lola, a die-hard Manhattanite who moves to New Jersey with her mom and twin sisters. The class princess and her gang of harpies set out to undermine her. — D. Germain. (PG: mild thematic elements, brief language.) 1 hour, 32 minutes. D+

"THE COOLER": William H. Macy stars as a perpetual loser hired by an old-time Vegas-type casino boss (the terrific Al Pacino) to dampen the luck of others. Trouble is, this "cooler's" luck starts to turn. The film has a few weak notes, but also an off-beat glee. — M. Pols. (R: strong sexuality, violence, language, some drug use.) 1 hour, 41 minutes. B

"DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA NIGHTS": A "reimagining" of the original "Dirty Dancing," starring Diego Luna and Romola Garai and set in 1958 Cuba. She's an affluent American who hangs out at a fancy hotel; he's a Cuban fellow who waits tables there. This couple, Katey and Javier, must meet on the sly, away from the protective eyes of her parents and the snobbish (even racist) eyes of her peers. Their forbidden relationship turns out to be about such lofty abstractions as supporting the art of the dance and fighting snobbery. Fine sentiments, but where's the heat? This film's too noble to get down and dirty. — J. Boyar. (PG-13: sensuality.) 1 hour, 26 minutes. B

"THE DREAMERS": Bernardo Bertolucci will soon be 64, but this NC-17-rated film seems like the sex fantasies of a college student with a bong. Set in Paris during the 1968 riots, it focuses less on politics than the sexual envelope-pushing of its three young, gorgeous protagonists. Quasi-necrotic. Even. Dresses up sex as high art, with disposable intellectualism. — M. Pols. (NC-17: explicit sexual content.) 1 hour, 55 minutes. C-

"EUROTRIP": The pick of the year so far for the late-teen, early-twenty-something gross-out crowd, piling on unsightly gags about S&M sexual aids and nude beaches overruled by homely men. The thin story line centers on Scotty, who rebuffs a cyber-pass from his German e-mail pen pal, Mieke, thinking it's a homosexual advance. Too late, Scotty learns that "Mieke" is a girl's name and that this is the babe of his dreams. With the help of a few friends, he sets out to Berlin to find her. — D. Germain. (R: sexuality, nudity, language and drug/alcohol content.) 1 hour, 31 minutes. C

"50 FIRST DATES": Adam Sandler plays Henry, a marine-park veterinarian who falls hopelessly in love with Lucy (Drew Barrymore), an art teacher who suffers short-term memory loss. Each day, Lucy's recall is wiped clean, so Henry must win her back over and over. At times so sweet, you'll wish the comedy relief weren't so drawn out and crude; and Henry's profession is but an elaborate excuse for the Marine World equivalent of sex and flatulence jokes. — G. Lovell. (PG-13: sex, language, crude humor.) 1 hour, 36 minutes. B-

"THE FOG OF WAR": Errol Morris' Oscar-winning documentary about the life lessons learned by Robert S. McNamara, former secretary of Defense for JFK and LBJ, from his involvement in World War II and the Vietnam War. Begs more questions than it answers, and doesn't expect an apology from McNamara, who is still cagey. Make no mistake: He's in charge, not Morris. But the film is of obvious interest, and in these uncertain times, the lessons McNamara gleaned in hindsight are of piercing relevance. — M. Pols. (PG-13: some scenes of violence.) 1 hour, 46 minutes. B+

"GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING": An art history mystery about the imagined origins of a painting by 17th century Dutch master Vermeer, the titular "Girl With a Pearl Earring." Based on the novel by Tracy Chevalier, the film suggests that the unknown model was a maid in the Vermeer household, a lovely young thing named Griet (Scarlett Johansson) whom the married Vermeer (Colin Firth) had some deep connection with. Composed of many moments of the two staring silently at each other, the movie is as beautiful to look at as a Vermeer, thanks to cinematographer Eduardo Serra, but it is also stupefying, pretentious swill. — M. Pols. (PG-13: some sexual content.) 1 hour, 39 minutes. D+

"GLOOMY SUNDAY": Set in mid-1930s Budapest, this film focuses on a love triangle. Laszlo is a sophisticated Hungarian Jew who lives for two things: the restaurant that bears his name and Ilona, his hostess and lover. She's a beauty, and the restaurant is filled nightly with sighing parties of one, but she is true to Laszlo until the arrival of Andras, a smoldering young cocktail pianist. — T. Burr. (Not rated: nudity, sexual situations, brief violence; in German with English subtitles.) 1 hour, 54 minutes. C+

"HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG": An adaptation of Andre Dubus III's best-selling novel. His plot, a contemporary American tragedy centered on a real estate squabble between a former drug addict wrongfully evicted from her house (Jennifer Connelly) and the Iranian immigrant who buys it

on auction (Ben Kingsley) had the germ of genius, but the execution hovered in the realm of melodrama. Thankfully, Vadim Perelman's devastatingly somber movie spares us the weak writing, tones down the hysteria somewhat and features some of the best performances of the year from Kingsley, Connelly and Shohreh Aghdashloo. No one is completely sympathetic and the story is as bleak as can be, but it's worth it. — M. Pols. (R: some violence/disturbing images, language and a scene of sexuality.) 2 hours, 6 minutes. A-

"IN AMERICA": This film by Jim Sheridan ("My Left Foot") is shot to look like a memory, as if we're reliving family history. An Irish family relocates in a rundown Manhattan apartment, escaping tragedy back home (the death of another child). Inspired by real-life events in Sheridan's life, with glowing performances (including Djimon Hounsou as a neighbor), we forgive its excesses, won over by the gentle nostalgia. — M. Pols. (PG-13: some sexuality, drug references, brief violence and language.) 1 hour, 43 minutes. B+

"JAPANESE STORY": A busy geologist (Tom Collette) is forced to take a demanding, difficult Japanese client (Gottaro Tsunashima) on a trip through the Outback. They're as different as night and day, but find common ground after getting lost together. Collette ("The Sixth Sense," "About a Boy") gives an honest, open performance and, bless her, finally gets a chance to be sexy. The story is unexpectedly touching. — M. Pols. (R: some sexuality and language.) 1 hour, 45 minutes. B+

"THE LAST SAMURAI": Tom Cruise plays a Civil War veteran who travels to Japan to help train the emperor's army to fight like Americans. Their target is a stubborn samurai (Japanese star Ken Watanabe) in a smooth, compelling performance) who won't give up the old ways. Cruise's character comes to respect the noble samurai, even to fight by his side. Surprisingly short, with stirring battle scenes, but overly long and hampered by the very Cruisiness of Cruise. With Watanabe around, who needs Cruise as a hero? — M. Pols. (R: strong violence and battle sequences.) 2 hours, 24 minutes. B-

"THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING": Director Peter Jackson's magnificent finale to the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy reminds us of the magic missing in filmmaking. The journey into Mordor continues, simultaneously with the defense of Gondor against the Orc army. Standout performances include Sean Astin as Samwise Gamgee, Miranda Otto's woman warrior and Viggo Mortensen as Aragorn, whose rallying cry in battle makes you want to throw down your popcorn, pick up a sword and rush the screen to help. An epic, a masterpiece, a treasure. — M. Pols. (PG-13: intense battle sequences, frightening images.) 3 hours, 21 minutes. A

"THE LOST SKELETON OF CADAVRA": This campy, black-and-white sci-fi movie follows the misadventures of a dedicated scientist and his perpetually cheerful wife as they venture into the woods looking for a crashed meteor and its "atmosphere" so he can "do science." Two space aliens are also looking for the fabled substance to repair their spaceship, and a mad scientist needs it to restore life to a skeleton he has found so he can rule the world. — G. Whipp. (PG-13: brief mild language.) 1 hour, 29 minutes. B

"LOST IN TRANSLATION": Everything about writer-director Sofia Coppola's wry and wistful film is lovely, and that includes, of all things, the presence and performance of Bill Murray. He plays an aging American actor in Tokyo to film commercials for a Japanese whiskey. Bored, de-

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MOVIE LISTINGS

For Friday March 5

Alameda County
Alameda 510-548-7249
Alameda (PG-13) 7, 9, 25
The Life of the Hon. John Brown (Not Rated) 7, 30, 40

Bay Area
Bay Area 510-524-8598
Bay Area (PG-13) 11, 45, 2, 4, 20, 6, 45

Bay Area
Bay Area (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 510-457-4282
Bay Street 16 12, 10, 3, 5, 7, 30

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

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Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

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Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

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Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Bay Street 16
Bay Street 16 (R) 12, 2, 30, 4, 45, 7, 10

Twisted (R) 12, 2, 25, 4, 45, 7, 35, 10, 05.

Renaissance Oaks Theatre
1875 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-526-1636
The Barbarian Invasions (R) 7:15, 9:20.
Hidalgo (PG-13) 7, 9, 35.

Parkway Theatre
1834 Park Blvd. Oakland 510-614-2400
Big Fish (PG-13) 7, 9, 25
Calendar Girls (PG-13) 6:30.
The Cooler (R) 9:45.
The Last Samurai (R) 9:15.

Piedmont Theatre
4195 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley 510-654-2758
In America (PG-13) 1:30, 6:45.
Monster (R) 4:15, 9.
Mystic River (R) 2, 5, 8, 15.
Touching the Void (Not Rated) 1:45, 4:30, 7, 9, 20.

Shattuck Cinemas
2231 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-644-2292
21 Grams (R) 3:45, 9.
Battle of Algiers (NR) 1:20, 4:05, 6:50, 9:30.
Big Fish (PG-13) 9:40.
City of God (R) 1:15, 4, 6:45, 9:35.
Girl With a Pearl Earring (PG-13) 1:25, 6:40.
Kitchen Stories (Not Rated) 3:15, 5:25, 7:35.
Lost in Translation (R) 2:10, 4:40, 7:20.
The Lost Skeleton of Cadavra (PG) 1:10, 9:50.
Monster (R) 1:30, 4:15, 7, 9:45.
My Architect (Not Rated) 1:40, 4:20, 6:55, 9:25.
Mystic River (R) 2, 5, 8.
Osama (PG-13) 1:05, 3:10, 5:05, 7:10, 9:10.
The Triplets of Belleville (PG-13) 1, 3:05, 5:10, 7:15, 9:20.

United Artists Berkeley 7
2211 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-843-0193
50 First Dates 12:10, 2:35, 5:15, 7:35, 10:30.
Broken Lizard's Club Dread (R) 12, 2:30, 5:05, 7:30, 10:15.
Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen (PG) 12:30, 2:50, 5, 7:10, 9:45.
Dirty Dancing Havana Nights (PG-13) 12:45, 3, 5:30, 7:45, 10.
Starsky & Hutch (PG-13) 12:15, 1:15, 2:45, 3:45, 5:20, 7, 8, 9:45, 10:25.
Twisted (R) 1, 3:30, 5:55, 8:15, 10:35.

United Artists Emery Bay
6330 Christie Ave., Emeryville 510-420-0482
50 First Dates 1, 3:15, 5:40, 8:15, 10:30.
Against the Ropes (PG-13) 4:30, 10.
Barbershop 2 (PG-13) 2, 4:50, 7:30, 10:15.
Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen (PG) 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:45.
Eurotrip (R) 1:30, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10, 10:20.
Fog of War (PG-13) 1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8, 10:15.
Miracle (PG) 1:05, 4, 7, 10.
The Passion of the Christ (R) 1:30, 2:15, 4:15, 5, 7, 7:45, 9:45, 10:30.
Something's Gotta Give (PG-13) 1:20, 4:20, 7:15, 10:10.
Welcome to Mooseport (PG-13) 1:45, 7:15.

Central Contra Costa

Renaissance Orinda Theatre
4 Orinda Theatre Sq., Orinda 925-254-9060
The Fog of War (PG-13) 12, 4, 8.
Hidalgo (PG-13) 1, 4, 7, 9, 35.
In America (PG-13) 2, 6, 10.

The Passion of the Christ (R) 12:30, 3:45, 7:15, 9:45.

Renaissance Park Theatre
3519 Golden Gate Way, Lafayette 925-283-7997
Red Betsy (PG) 2, 4:30, 7, 9, 15.

Rheem Theatre
350 Park St. Moraga 925-988-3411
50 First Dates (PG-13) 5:20, 7:30, 9:40.
Miracle (PG) 5, 7, 40.
Starsky & Hutch (PG-13) 4:50, 7, 9:20.
Twisted (R) 5:15, 7:20, 9:30.

West Contra Costa

Century 16 Hilltop
3200 Klose Way, Richmond 510-758-2345
50 First Dates (PG-13) 11:25, 2, 4:35, 7:10, 9:45.
Barbershop 2: Back in Business (PG-13) 2:25, 4:55, 7:25.
Broken Lizard's Club Dread (R) 11:35, 1:30, 9:10, 30.
Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen (PG) 11:05, 1:15, 3:35, 5:55, 8:10, 10:20.
Dirty Dancing Havana Nights (PG-13) 11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:50, 8:05, 10:15.
Eurotrip (R) 1:25, 10:35.
Hidalgo (PG-13) 11:55, 1:30, 3, 4:30, 6, 7:20, 9, 10:30.
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (PG-13) 11:30, 3:40, 8.
Mystic River (R) 3:45, 7:05.
The Passion of the Christ (R) 11, 11:40, 12:25, 1:10, 1:55, 2:35, 3:20, 4:05, 4:50, 5:30, 6:15, 7, 7:45, 8:25, 9:10, 9:55.
Starsky & Hutch (PG-13) 11:20, 12, 12:45, 1:40, 2:20, 3:05, 4, 4:40, 5:25, 6:20, 7, 7:50, 8:40, 9:20, 10:10.
Twisted (R) 11:45, 2:15, 4:45, 7:15, 9:40.

San Francisco

AMC Van Ness 14
1000 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco 415-922-4282
50 First Dates (PG-13) 1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40.
Barbershop 2: Back in Business (PG-13) 2:25, 5:30, 8, 10:35.
Broken Lizard's Club Dread (R) 5:15, 10:35.
Cold Mountain (R) 1:05, 4:25, 8:10.
Dirty Dancing Havana Nights (PG-13) 2:10, 4:50, 7:10, 9:35.
Eurotrip (R) 12:55, 3:30, 6, 8:30, 11.
Hidalgo (PG-13) 12:40, 1:10, 3:50, 4:20, 7, 7:30, 10:10, 10:40.
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (PG-13) 1, 5, 9.
Lost in Translation (R) 2, 4:45, 7:15, 9:50.
Miracle (PG) 1:10, 4:10, 7:25, 10:30.
Starsky & Hutch (PG-13) 1:50, 2:30, 5:05, 5:35, 7:45, 8:15, 10:25, 10:55.
Twisted (R) 1:45, 5:10, 7:40, 10:15.
Welcome to Mooseport (PG-13) 2:25, 7:50.

AMC Kabuki 8
1881 Post Street, San Francisco 415-931-9800
50 First Dates (PG-13) 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:15, 10:35.
Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen (PG) 1:30.
Hidalgo (PG-13) 1, 4, 7, 10:05.
Miracle (PG) 1:30, 4:30, 10:15.
The Passion of the Christ (R) 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10.
Something's Gotta Give (PG-13) 1:20.
Starsky & Hutch (PG-13) 12:45, 3, 5:25, 8, 10:30.
Twisted (R) 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:05, 10:25.

Bridge Theatre

3010 Geary Blvd., San Francisco 415-751-3213
Touching the Void (Not Rated) 2, 4:30, 7:10, 9:45.

Clay Theatre
2261 Fillmore Street, San Francisco 415-346-1124
Monsieur Ibrahim (R) 11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 7, 9:20.

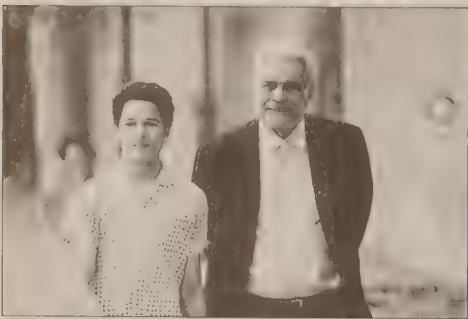
Embarcadero Center Cinemas
1 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco 415-352-0835
21 Grams (R) 1:10, 4, 6:50, 9:50.
The Fog of War (PG-13) 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10.
In America (PG-13) 1:20, 4:10, 7, 9:30.
Monster (R) 12, 2:25, 4:50, 7:20, 10.
The Triplets of Belleville (PG-13) 1, 4:40, 7:30, 9:40.

Lumiere Theatre
1572 California St., San Francisco 415-885-3201
The Dreamers (NC-17) 12, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 10.
Mystic River (R) 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45.
Osama (PG-13) 12:30, 2:40, 4:45, 7, 9:30.

Opera Plaza Cinema
601 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco 415-771-0183
The Barbarian Invasions (R) 1:30, 4:15, 6:50, 9:10.
City of God (R) 2:15, 5:10, 8:30.
Girl With a Pearl Earring (PG-13) 1:45, 4:30, 7, 9:20.
Red Trousers: The Life of the Hong Kong Stuntman (Not Rated) 2, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30.

Loews IMAX Theatre
101 Fourth St., San Francisco 415-369-6201
The Matrix Revolutions (R) 4:50, 9:30.
The Young Black Stallion (G) 10:30, 12, 1:30, 3:10, 7:40.

Loews Theatres Metreon
101 Fourth St., San Francisco 415-369-6201
50 First Dates (PG-13) 10:50, 1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:40.
Big Fish (PG-13) 2:20, 5:10, 8:10, 11.
Broken Lizard's Club Dread (R) 11:50.
Cold Mountain (R) 11:10, 3, 6:20, 9:50.
Dirty Dancing Havana Nights (PG-13) 11, 12:40, 4, 6:50, 9:10, 11:40.
Eurotrip (R) 12:20, 2:40, 5, 7:20, 9:40, 12.
Hidalgo (PG-13) 11:40, 12:40, 3:10, 4:10, 6:40, 7:50, 10, 11:10.
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (PG-13) 12, 4:20, 9.
The Passion of the Christ (R) 10:40, 11:20, 12:10, 2, 2:50, 3:40, 5:20, 6:10, 7, 8:40, 9:20, 10:10, 11:50.
Starsky & Hutch (PG-13) 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30, 11:20, 12:10.
Tw



OMAR SHARIF, right, is a father figure to Momo (Pierre Boulanger) in his role in the understated, heartfelt French film "Monsieur Ibrahim."

Reviews

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a Japanese whiskey. Bored, depressed about his lousy marriage and jet-lagged, he meets a young American woman (Scarlett Johansson) who has accompanied her photographer husband (Giovanni Ribisi) to Japan. They end up wandering Tokyo together, developing a fleeting but intense friendship. Murray is at his absolute best, and Coppola proves she's a director to watch. — M. Pols. (R: some sexual content.) 1 hour, 35 minutes. A

"MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD": From director Peter Weir, a beautiful and brawny rendition of Patrick O'Brian's tales of friendship and adventure on the high seas in the early 19th century. A British war ship pursues a high-tech (for the times) French ship from Brazil to the Galapagos Islands. Russell Crowe makes an able Captain Jack Aubrey and Paul Bettany an endearing Stephen Maturin, the ship's surgeon, a pacifist and Jack's best friend. The action sequences are first-rate, and the tender affection between the men aboard is something rarely seen in movies. — M. Pols. (PG-13: intense battle sequences, related images and brief language.) 2 hours, 8 minutes. A-

"THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS": It takes a lot of forgiving and forgetting to derive any pleasure from this final chapter in the stylish man-vs.-machine trilogy. You have to let go of disappointment over "Reloaded," the second installment released earlier this year; you must overlook a truly hideous opening hour; and you have to forget the first "Matrix," an exhilarating experience that never succumbed, as this does, to self-conscious solemnity, senseless riddles and protracted death scenes. — P. Flowers. (R: sci-fi violence, brief sexual content.) 2 hours, 9 minutes. C

"MIRACLE": The perennially underappreciated Kurt Russell gives an assured, intelligent performance as coach Herb Brooks in this well-made film about the 1980 Olympic gold-medal-winning U.S. hockey team. Director Gavin O'Connor sensibly cast real hockey players, recruited from colleges and some pro teams. As a result, the on-ice action feels genuinely exciting. — M. Pols. (PG: language and some rough sports action.) 2 hours, 16 minutes. B+

"MONSTER": Charlize Theron pulls off the year's most astounding screen makeover as Aileen Wuornos, the notorious Florida murderer. Director Patty Jenkins uncovers the lost, love-starved child cowering under the killer's hard shell. Wuornos, who confessed to murdering six men in the late 1980s and early '90s, died in the electric chair in 2002. By the time the movie begins, Wuornos has plied her trade for years as a hitchhiking low-rent prostitute working the highways of central Florida. The film focuses on her desperate, last-ditch relationship with Selby Wall (Christina Ricci), the lesbian lover who ended up testifying against her. — S. Holden. (R: graphic rape scene, several murders and abundant profanity.) 1 hour, 51 minutes. B+

"MY ARCHITECT": A documentary about Nathaniel Kahn's odyssey to learn more about his father, famous architect Louis Kahn, who had three different families with three women, two of them secretly. A graceful and touching exploration of the importance of fatherhood that also leaves us with a new appreciation for the architect's work. — M. Pols. (NR) 1 hour, 56 minutes. A-

"MYSTIC RIVER": There are many reasons to admire this dark drama, from the remarkable level of acting talent to the maturity and measured elegance of Clint Eastwood's direction. The film stimulates its audience like a classic old-fashioned mystery, the tension building to almost painful

levels. Two tragedies lie at its heart, with breakout performances by Sean Penn and Tim Robbins as childhood friends forever shaped by ominous events. — M. Pols. (R: language, violence.) 2 hours, 17 minutes. A-

"OSAMA": This fictional Afghan film takes place sometime before U.S. bombs began falling on Kabul, when the Taliban was ravaging the country. It recounts the twisted story of a 12-year-old girl forced into male disguise in order to work to feed herself, her mother and grandmother, and that of Afghan women whose right to exist was all but denied in the name of God. Raw and wretchedly current, it packs a cruel emotional wallop. — M. Dargis. (PG-13: mature thematic elements.) 1 hour, 22 minutes. B+

"THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST": Mel Gibson directed and co-wrote this literal — and relentlessly brutal — retelling of the last 12 hours of Jesus' life. Although deeply intense and at times moving, the film is so violent, it ultimately pushes the viewer away and squanders its opportunity to enlighten. The best scenes are between Mary and her son, when Gibson backs off and lets the humanity shine through. — K. Hershenson. (R: intense graphic violence.) 2 hours, 6 minutes. C

"PETER PAN": A lavish spectacle with a bittersweet core: an old-fashioned family treat. R.J. Hogan ("My Best Friend's Wedding") may have created a classic of his own, by staying true to J.M. Barrie's beloved source material. Peter Pan is played by a boy, which is refreshing, and this Wendy has more dimension than most. — M. Pols. (PG: action sequences and peril.) 1 hour, 53 minutes. B+

"PIECES OF APRIL": With a theme about a dying mother (Patricia Clarkson), an estranged daughter (Katie Holmes) and a Thanksgiving dinner reunion, this film from writer/director Peter Hedges has the potential to be as cloying as sweet potato pie. But Hedges ("What's Eating Gilbert Grape") gracefully dodges that bullet, delivering a movie that manages to be darkly funny and deeply touching at the same time. — M. Pols. (PG-13: language, sensuality, drug content and images of nudity.) 1 hour, 21 minutes. A-

"SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE": When making a love story, you've got to consider the kissability of your stars. Watching this movie, it's hard to imagine anyone wanting to smooch the male lead. That would be Jack Nicholson, as a raffish music executive who starts out dating a young woman (Amanda Peet), but finds himself failing for her mother (Diane Keaton). This was an opportunity to make a statement about truly adult romance, but director Nancy Meyers blows it. — M. Pols. (PG-13: sexual content, brief nudity, strong language.) C

"THE STATION AGENT": A reticent dwarf, a grieving mother and a chatty hot-dog vendor walk into a bar. Actually, they drink beer on a porch. Sounds like the setup to a joke, but it's the premise of this small film bursting with insightful humor, unforced poignancy and beautifully drawn characters. Peter Dinklage, Patricia Clarkson and Bobby Cannavale vividly portray three lonely people in rural New Jersey who form an unlikely social circle, despite their anti-social tendencies. — C. Lemire. (R: language, some drug content.) 1 hour, 30 minutes. B+

"TOUCHING THE VOID": Two climbers go up a mountain in Peru. One breaks his leg and must be lowered by his partner. When the rope leaves the injured man dangling helplessly and hopelessly over a crevasse, his partner makes the decision to cut the rope to save his own life. This compelling documentary, featuring interviews with the survivors and re-creations of the climb using actors, is agonizingly suspenseful, even though we know the remarkable outcome



OWEN WILSON, left, and Ben Stiller appear to be playing the same roles they always play (Wilson as the easygoing guy; Stiller as the uptight one) in "Starsky & Hutch."

from the get-go. — M. Pols. (NR) 1 hour, 46 minutes. B+

"THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE": The film's two lines of intelligible dialogue have been dubbed into English. Its sensibility, however, remains irreducibly French. The overture is a black-and-white spectacle: naughty, exuberant and a little creepy. It introduces the Triplets of the title, a trio of gangly, cloche-wearing scat singers. The story is too bizarre and wonderful to summarize, but it winds up in Belleville, a Manhattan-like dream city. — A.O. Scott. (PG-13: some violent and frightening scenes.) 1 hour, 20 minutes. A

"21 GRAMS": Like Mexican director Gonzalez Inarritu's last film, "Amores Perros," this one is about the ways tragedy (in this case a car accident) creates an unstoppable emotional maelstrom for those involved. Its arty, choppy style distracts from the truth: that the film is permeated with melodrama and not as deep as it seems. Sean Penn is great in the lead, but better in "Mystic River." — M. Pols. (R: language, sexuality, some violence and drug use.) 2 hours, 5 minutes. B-

"TWISTED": Newly promoted homicide investigator Jessica Shepard (Ashley Judd) is one twisted sister. Her father had been a near-legendary cop before going on a killing spree that ended with her mother's death and his suicide. Her first case involves a serial killer whose victims all happen to be her former bed partners, and as evidence points her way, she begins to wonder if she has inherited Dad's homicidal urges.

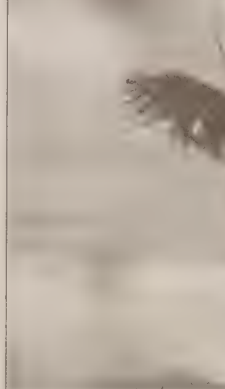
Samuel L. Jackson and Andy Garcia have low-impact roles in this convoluted thriller wannabe. — P. Wuntch. (R: violence, sex, language, nudity.) 1 hour, 37 minutes. C-

"WELCOME TO MOOSEPORT": Gene Hackman plays a popular president who leaves office, retires to his summer home in sleepy Mooseport, Maine, and blunders into a mayoral race against Handy Harrison (Ray Romano), the kindhearted local plumber. The movie dinkily orchestrates scenarios that turn Monroe and Handy into fierce rivals. The high jinks should be hilarious, but the gags fall flat as the movie lumbers along at far too leisurely a pace. — D. Germain. (PG-13: brief sexual comments and nudity.) 1 hour, 51 minutes. C

"WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILLONI": A movie star needs a reputation makeover, so his managers

arrange a contest for a young lady to win a date. He's charmed by how sweet and down-to-earth she is and decides to pursue her, much to the chagrin of the hometown boy who's loved her from afar for years. Hardly groundbreaking, but offers some basic lessons on how the tired romantic comedy genre can be revitalized. — M. Pols. (PG-13: sexual content, some drug references and language.) 1 hour, 35 minutes. B

"YOU GOT SERVED": David and Elgin, leaders of a street dance troupe, take on all comers. No crew in Los Angeles can touch their scintillating moves until Wade, a smirky, spiky-haired suburban white boy, brings in a pack to steal their thunder. After besting the pair, he snarls, "You suckers got served!" The plot — and there really isn't enough of one to fill a music video — revolves around a rift be-



VIGGO MORTENSEN rides again — this time in "Hidalgo," a Western about a perilous com-

tween David and Elgin. Will the guys patch up their differences in time for the big dance contest and a chance to show up Wade? Duh! — D. Hiltbrand. (PG-13: drug and sexual references, mild violence.) 1 hour, 33 minutes. D

"YOUNG BLACK STALLION": A horse of a very familiar color. This is a

prequel to "The Black Stallion," not by the people who made the magnificent film, it's your plucky kid and maverick set in a picturesque locale, but with a very muddy IMAX photography. — C. 45 minutes. C-



Thanks to all of You
who helped make 2003 a success!

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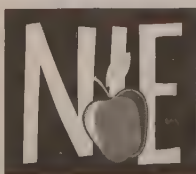
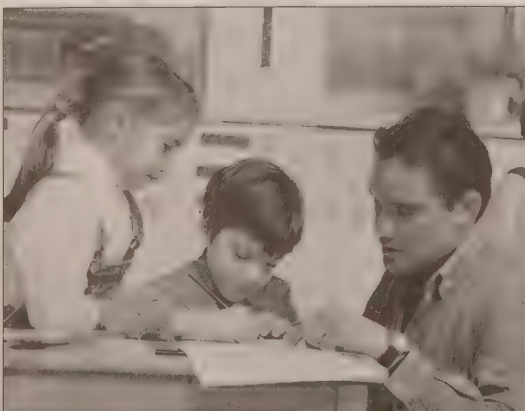
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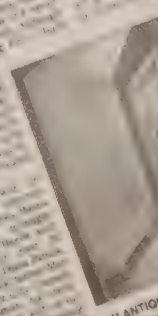


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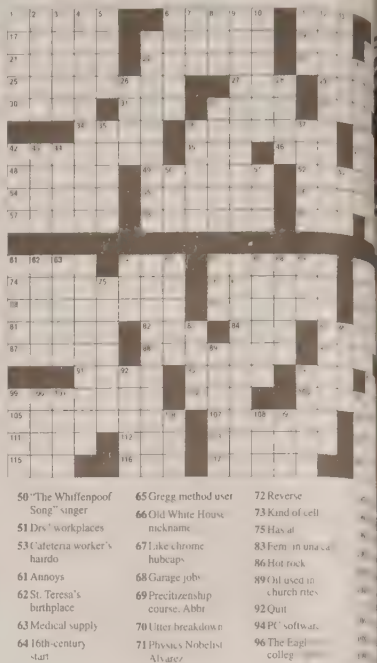
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Events

FROM PAGE C5

OAKLAND ARENA — Britney Spears, Kelis, March 9, 8 p.m. \$40.50 to \$76. Hegenberger Road and Interstate 880, Oakland. 925-762-2277, 510-762-2277 or www.ticketmaster.com.

OAKLAND BOX THEATER — "Tuesday Night Oakland Box Series," 8 p.m. Live and experimental music. \$7 to \$1,000. 1928 Telegraph Ave., 510-451-1932 or www.oaklandbox.com.

PARAMOUNT THEATER — The Temptations and the Four Tops, March 6, 8 p.m. \$49.50 to \$75. 2025 Broadway, Oakland. 925-685-TIXS, 510-625-TIXS, 415-421-TIXS or www.ticketmaster.com.

SHATTUCK DOWN LOW — Live Salsa Night, Wednesday, 8 p.m. \$10. For ages 21 and older. 2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-1159 or www.shattuckdownlow.com.

STARRY PLOUGH PUB — Phil Roy, Julian Coreal, March 5, \$10. Po' Girl, Chris Brown and Kate Fenner, March 6, \$8.

Real Sippin' Whiskies, Loretta Lynch, Yardsale, March 11, \$5. Celtic Meltdown, Ian Butler, Blue on Green, Hy Brassyl, March 12, \$6. Farma, Crooked Jades, The Shiftless Rounders, March 13, \$10.

For ages 21 and over unless otherwise noted. Sunday and Wednesday, 8 p.m.; Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-641-2082.

YOSHIS — Mike Stern, Victor Wooten, Dave Weckl, Bob Franceschini, through March 7, \$20 to \$24. Toshiko Akoyoshi Trio, March 8, \$18. Mose Allison, March 9 and March 10, \$10 to \$16.

Keiko Matsui, March 11 through March 14, \$24 to \$28. Shows are Monday through Saturday, 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200, www.yoshis.com or www.ticketweb.com.

DANCE
ASHKENAZ — Tom Rigney and Flambeau, March 9, 8:30 p.m. Cajun dance lesson at 8 p.m. with Cheryl McBride, \$9.

Anthony Paule and Mz. Dee Band, March 10, 9 p.m. Swing dance lesson at 8 p.m. with Nick and Shanna, \$9. Steve Lucky and the Rhumba Bums

with Ms. Carmen Getit, March 12, 9:30 p.m. Swing dance lesson at 8 p.m. with Nick and Shanna, \$13.

Kotoja, March 13, 9:30 p.m. African dance lesson at 9 p.m. with Comfort Mensah, \$13.

Cafe Belle Belly Dance Showcase, March 14, 7:30 p.m. Belly dance class at 6:30 p.m. \$9.

1317 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. 510-525-5055 or www.ashkenaz.com.

CAFE DE LA PAZ — "Flamenco Wine and Paella," March 13 and March 14, 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Two nights of food, wine and dance with Yaelisa and Caminos Flamencos. There will be a three-course dinner with the performance. \$42 to \$55. 1600 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-0662 or www.cafedelapaz.com.

CAL PERFORMANCES — Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, March 9 through March 14. The world-renowned dance company performs new works, revivals and revered classics in three separate programs.

Program A: "Heart Song" choreographed by Alvin Ailey, "Treading" choreographed by Elisa Monte, "Revelations" choreography by Alvin Ailey, and the Bay Area premiere of "Juba" choreographed by Robert Battle.

Tuesday, 8 p.m.; Friday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m.

Program B: An Ailey Classic Program with all dances choreographed by Alvin Ailey and featuring the 1974 "Memoria" and "Night Creature," the 1980 "Phases," the 1988 "Opus McShann," "A Song for You" created in 1972, the 1984 "For Bird With Love," the 1973 "Hidden Rites," the 1971 "Cry" and Ailey's signature 1960 "Revelations." Wednesday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 2 p.m.

Program C: Dwight Rhoden's "Bounty Verses," Judith Jamison's "Hymn" and "The Winter in Lisbon" choreographed by Billy Wilson. Thursday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 8 p.m.

Schooltime Performance: "Revelations," March 11, 3 p.m. Open to students in grades 2 to 12 in Bay Area schools. \$3 per student or adult chaperone. Reservations required. 510-642-0212.

\$32 to \$58. Tuesday through Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m. Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Bancroft Way and Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. 510-642-9988 or www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

SHATTUCK DOWN LOW — Live Salsa, Wednesday, 8 p.m. A live salsa band plays, and there are beginning lessons at 8 p.m. and intermediate ones at 8:45 p.m.

\$10 general; \$5 students. 2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-1159 or www.shattuckdownlow.com.

STARRY PLOUGH PUB — "Dance Class & Celi," Mondays, 7 p.m. Traditional Irish music and dance.

"The Starry Session," Sundays, 8 p.m. Irish traditional music and song led by Shay Black. Sliding scale.

For ages 21 and over. Dance lesson at 7 p.m.; music at 9 p.m. 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082.

OUTDOORS

CRAB COVE VISITOR CENTER — "Season Opening Celebration," March 6, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There will be live music, fun activities, crafts, guided walks and tours.

"Full Moon Minus Tide Exploration," March 6, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Explore the wet and dry world of the intertidal zone. For adults only. Registration required.

"Orientation to Gray Whale Watching,"

March 7, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. A slide show to introduce watchers to what they will find along the coast and on the boat trip. For ages 8 and older. Registration required.

"Low Tide at the Cove," March 13 and March 14, 11 a.m. to noon. A guided exploration of the marine reserve to find clues about the animals that make the cove their home.

"Whale Watch by Boat," March 13, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Enjoy morning sea viewing the migrating gray whales. There may also be seals, sea lions, sea otters, sea stars and bird life.

For ages 8 and older. \$36 to \$40 general; \$30 to \$34 seniors and children. Registration required. 510-636-1684.

Free unless otherwise noted; parking fee may be charged. 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda. 510-521-6887 or www.ebparks.org.

OAKLAND ZOO — SPECIAL EVENTS — "Bedtime with the Beasts," March 13 and March 14 and March 19 and March 20. A chance for youth ages 6 to 18 and their adult chaperones to spend the night in the Oakland Zoo and get a special look at what goes on there after the gates close for the evening. An Oakland Zoo specialist will lead the group on a special evening tour of the Zoo and then campers can snuggle down in the comfort of the Education Building.

Reservations required. Saturday and Sunday, 510-632-9525, ext. 142. St. Patrick's Day, March 17. Free train rides for anyone wearing green.

"Birds, Bagels and Binoculars," March 20, 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Join Bay Area bird enthusiasts for a walking tour and continental breakfast on this expedition to discover the wild birds that live in and around the Oakland Zoo. Bring binoculars and a bird book. Wear shoes comfortable for walking. Reservations required. 510-632-9525, ext. 142.

Earth Watch Lecture and Reception, March 21, 4 p.m. "Wildlife Trails of the American West," a lecture by conservation biologist William Newmark. He will discuss his latest findings on wildlife trail ecology and the design of efficient wildlife corridors in the American West. 4 p.m.: Meet the Speaker 4:30 p.m.: Lecture. At the Peoplesoft Center for Science and Education. Reservations required. 510-632-9525, ext. 142.

"Family Sundown Safari," March 27 and March 28. Enjoy a fun and educational experience in the unique environment of the Oakland Zoo. Spend an evening with the animals and camp out in the Zoo meadow overnight. Reservations required. Saturday, 6 p.m. to Sunday, 10 a.m. 510-632-9525, ext. 100.

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"Eggs-Cellent Eggs" Near to noon. Learn about kinds of eggs and egg-layers at the Zoo wacky experiments. Eggs are all about. Materials are included. Required. 510-632-9525, ext. 142. \$8.50 general; \$5 seniors ages 2 to 14, free children 2 to 4, parking fee. Daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Knowland St. Road, exit off Interstate 880. Oakland. 510-632-9525 or www.ebparks.org.

REI BERKELEY — A series on hikes and outdoor "Treking in Bhutan." March Day will share slides of years of exploring by foot.

Events are free and begin less otherwise noted. 1330 Ave., Berkeley. 510-674-1330.

ROBERTS REGIONAL AREA — Within the park are a heated outdoor pool, playing fields, soccer, hiking and riding trails. Once took their bearings in redwood tree on Bear here. Free Skyline. 5 mile north of Joaquin. Oakland. 510-521-6887 or www.ebparks.org.

FARMER'S MARKET

Soon to celebrate a decade at the El Cerrito Plaza.

The Farmers' Market at El Cerrito Plaza will celebrate its 10th anniversary in July of this year. We are very proud of our certified growers - the majority of them were with us on opening day in July 1994.

The Farmers' Market was started in 1994 by El Cerrito Plaza Marketing Director Dan McNeer in conjunction with the El Cerrito Plaza Merchant's Association. We've seen many changes - from the closing of Woolworth's and Emporium to finally the vibrant and beautiful shopping center we have now. In all of this change, the Farmers' Market has stayed consistent in providing quality, fresh produce and fruit sold by the friendly farmers who grow it. Both farmer and customer are very often on a first name basis and have become like family.

The market became more visible when it was moved to the southeast parking area in July 1999. Jean Thompson, the market manager, started around that time and she looks forward to celebrating her 5th year with the market.

Every week, in addition to enjoying the entertainment, customers can sign up for and win a basket of fresh produce and fruit. Look for our anniversary celebration in July.

The market is open year round every Tuesday and Saturday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

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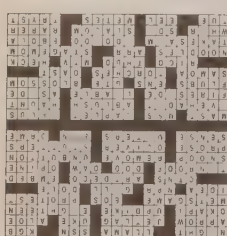
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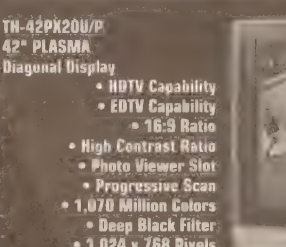


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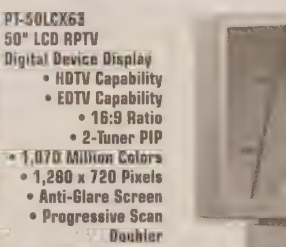


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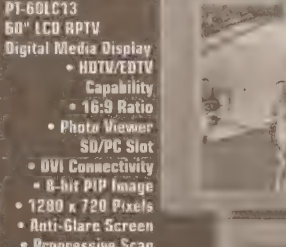


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Classical pianist enjoys independence

HADLEY MCCARROLL was determined to slow down what is referred to as "the music business" — away from the Bay Area to a more rural area, where she could have a more relaxed lifestyle and a more comfortable living. The pianist wanted to have a more comfortable lifestyle and a more comfortable living. The pianist wanted to have a more comfortable lifestyle and a more comfortable living.

moving to the Bay Area eight years ago, she has also found her "freeway philharmonic," she says. "I don't usually

feature a section with multiple pianists, chamber ensembles such as this one provides an opportunity for solo performance. Also, like many working pianists, McCarroll teaches students privately as well as at the San Francisco Community Music Center.

Q: What's the difference between an orchestra and a chamber ensemble like the one you've started?

A: You have a smaller number of players; for instance, in this concert, the largest number of people is 25 and the smallest is seven people. So these pieces were specifically written for a large chamber group, whereas in an orchestra, you're part of a section.

Q: What do you like about the ensemble format?

A: When you think of an orchestra, it's very blended together. When you think of chamber music, you have a more exposed, intimate setting. And every part is individually written for that player. It's a different way of playing. The thing that's great about chamber music is it gives more of an opportunity for soloists to be highlighted. ... The thing that's neat is that in the sections, fewer instruments are playing, so you see the quality of the performer.

Q: How did you get motivated to go out and start your own ensemble?

A: It was more of the thought that I could do it, that it was possible for me to organize it. A lot of people are too tired and too overworked to start anything and put in the commitment. Only through my network of musicians and their support could I have done this.



THE NAM TON STAFF

TIRED OF BEING PART of the "freeway philharmonic," pianist Hadley McCarroll decided to form her own group of classical musicians, the 36-member Oakland Chamber Ensemble.

I just thought simply it would be nice to play more and know more of the musicians in the area. It sort of mushroomed into a larger thing from there.

Q: What do you hope the ensemble imparts to audiences?

A: We want to celebrate the musical talent in Oakland and provide inexpensive, quality chamber music. A lot of people I've talked to said, "I don't know what chamber music is. I go to the orchestra or the ballet, but not sure about chamber music." In terms of diversity, I want to

expose people to different kinds of music ... I'd like to pit more standard work with something more out there. I'd like people to hear the gems and the rare ones. ... I would really like people to just think favorably on the idea of coming out to an evening of classical chamber music and really be challenged by the program and their idea of chamber and classical music.

Q: What has it been like to do more of the organizing and administrative work on top of your music?

A: I've enjoyed it. I really

enjoy the opportunity to connect with people. I'm really interested in people. It's part of why I want to get more people out to concerts. I want people excited about the community aspect of music.

Q: Talk about the program you've put together.

A: There was a work that I specifically wanted to play. It uses a tremendous number of wind instruments. ... I started researching and things started falling into place. ... What was interesting to me was there was a connection. All the

pieces were written as benchmarks of the composers as independents. It was at a time when they were doing something that was strange or (they were) in transition in style. We're an independent group, and there's an independence in our spirit.

— Cassandra Braun

The Oakland Chamber Ensemble performs "Independent," 8 p.m. Saturday at Mills College, 5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. Tickets are \$7-\$15. Contact 510-595-4691.

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"People You Meet in Life," by Mitch Albom, (Hyperion, \$24.95)

"Friends," by John Grisham, \$26.95
"Seasons of Max Tivoli," by San Greer (FSG, \$23.95)

"The Unicorn," by Anne McCaffrey (Dutton, \$24.95)
"The Marriage," by Anne McCaffrey (Dutton, \$24.95)

"The Devil in the White City," by Erik Larson, (Vintage, \$14.95)
"1,000 Places to See Before You Die," by Patricia Schultz, (Workman, \$18.95)

"What Should I Do With My Life?" by Po Bronson, (Random House, \$14.95)

"Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling," by Ross King, (Penguin, \$15.95)
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"Flashback," by Nevada Barr, (Berkeley, \$7.99)

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AUDITIONS AND CLASSES

Auditions

■ Apollo on Tour — 10 a.m.-5 p.m. March 6, Zellerbach Hall, intersection of Telegraph Avenue and Bancroft Way, UC Berkeley campus. Auditions for singers, comedians, hip-hop dancers and concert violinists; whether you are part of a gospel group, a chorus line, a barbershop quartet or a jazz ensemble, if you are a magician, a female impersonator or a one-man band. A piano will be provided during auditions and contestants must provide their own accompanist. Tape and CD sound systems will also be available for applicants using recorded music to accompany their audition. A house band will not be provided for the audition. For the final performance on May 8, vocal performers are encouraged to perform with the house band. If the use of the house band is required, musical charts or sheet music and a professional-quality tape must be received no later than two weeks in advance of the show date. From the audition process, 10-12 acts will be chosen to compete at the Showtime at the Apollo on Tour performance 8 p.m. May 8, Zellerbach Hall. The winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, two American Airlines plane tickets to New York and the opportunity to compete live on the world-famous Apollo Theatre stage in Harlem. Auditions will be scheduled in two-hour time blocks on March 6. Auditioners are encouraged to sign up in advance; walk-up auditioners will be accepted only on a "time-permitting" basis. Call Laura Abrams, 510-642-0212, or e-mail apollo@calperfs.berkeley.edu.

■ Benicia Old Town Theatre Group — "Emma's Child," 2-5 p.m. Sunday, 601 First St., Benicia and 7-9 p.m. Monday, 140 West J St., Benicia. Three men and six women (18-50). Call-backs Wednesday. Performances: April 16-May 8. 707-746-5526.

■ Cathy Steele Model and Talent Management — Open auditions for models, actors and singers, ages 5 years and older. Singers must have their own material and demos. Models' potential will be evaluated on an individual basis. No experience necessary. A world-class showcase will be held in Orlando, Fla., in July. Major Screen Actors Guild agents and casting directors attend this showcase. Call for audition dates and times. 925-676-9905.

■ Contra Costa Children's Chorus — Auditions are now being scheduled for placement in Levels I, II, III and Boys Chorus. Ages 5-18. Be prepared to sing a song of your choice. No previous choral experience is necessary. 925-945-7101, Ext. 200; or front-desk@childrengroup.org.

■ Devil Mountain Chorus — Seeking men to sing four-part harmony during informal songfests, vocal education sessions and show performances. Sight-reading not necessary. Rehearsals and auditions, 7:45 p.m. Tuesdays, Trinity Lutheran Church fellowship hall, 2317 Buena Vista Ave., Walnut Creek. 925-938-7664.

■ Diablo Regional Concert Band — Needs musicians in all sections. The band plays all types of music including classical, marches and show tunes. Performances are throughout the year in Martinez, Benicia and Pleasant Hill. Rehearsals 7 p.m. Thursdays. Performing Center for the Arts, Alhambra High School, E. Street, Martinez. Frank Cavoto, 707-748-1728.

attend this showcase. Call for audition dates and times. 925-676-9905.

■ Oakland Symphony Chorus — Singers to perform Beethoven's Missa Solemnis with Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Kent Nagano, conductor. Singers who have attractive voices, sight-reading skills and a commitment to fine choral singing. Rehearses 7:30-10 p.m. Wednesdays. To schedule audition, call 510-207-4093.

■ WomenSing — Seeking experienced women singers for a performance of the Faure Requiem, in collaboration with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. Rehearsals Wednesday evenings in Lafayette. Performances May 22, San Francisco and May 23, Berkeley. Appointment: 925-974-9169 or info@Womensing.org.

■ Allene's Artistic School of Dance — Now accepting students, 4 years through teens, for classes in tap, ballet and personality singing. Classes will be held locally. Performances given in area convalescent and retirement homes. Appointments: 925-687-4820.

■ Cathy Steele Model & Talent Management — Industry education seminars free of charge for people of all ages who are interested in starting a career in modeling and acting. Seminar covers fashion modeling, TV commercial, commercial print, industrial film and voice-over work for local and national markets. Seminars are held 7 p.m. Tuesdays and 1 p.m. Sundays. Bring current snapshot and notepad. Call to reserve a space one week in advance. 925-676-9904 or 925-676-9905.

■ Delta City Improv Academy — Introduction to the Art of Improvisation, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday. Fun, fast-paced, group-oriented three-hour workshop will introduce participants to Delta City Improv Academy's unique "Improvisational Method" through short-form scene work. All levels are welcome. \$20. Cue Productions Live, 1635 Colfax St., Concord. Kimberly, 510-384-8848.

■ La Pena Cultural Center — Bay Area artists teach free and for-fee classes: instructors' curriculum and demo CDs available upon request. Percussion, stringed instruments, ensembles, pan-pipe, poetry and salsa lessons. 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Call for schedule. 510-849-2568.

Classes/workshops

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cover designs for the magazine — which sold for a princely \$1 a copy in the 1930s — appear almost subversive. One cover by Edwin A. Georgi, in the style of Japanese block prints, appears from a distance to be a colorful, festive scene. Up close, it turns out to be a group of African-American women picking cotton.

The magazine covers and Romare Bearden's paintings and collages aim for the highest standards of artistic expression, no matter how different their audiences.

Bearden's cultural cavalades earned their place in galleries and museums through his years of study and experimentation. He became a prolific artist while holding a full-time job as a social worker in New York, but he also studied at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Since World War II, and particularly since the 1960s, America's cultural institutions have struggled to become less "insti-

tutional." They have worked to reflect a diverse population (goodbye, melting pot) and serve the people who now fill their communities and pay taxes to support their operation.

Fortunately, there are plenty of artists who are willing to fill the gaps and keep the debate going, and some first-rate artists reinterpret traditional art to startling effect. Fred Wilson did it last year at the Berkeley Art Museum with an exhibit that questioned the way we look at "ethnic" art.

Few artists have matched the impact of Oakland-born Robert Colescott, the African-American artist who updated a classic 19th century image in 1975 and called it "George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware." Now there's a painting that bridges American cultures.

Reach Robert Taylor at 925-977-8428 or rtaylor@cetimes.com.

Arts & Leisure

Friday, March 5, 2004



BILL MANN
Multimedia Notes

Syndicates and conglomerates

IT WON'T BE a surprise to most its fans that "The Sopranos" finally returns for its next-to-last fifth season Sunday at 9 on HBO.

As mentioned, I've already seen the first four hours of the new season, and, without giving anything too specific away, it can probably be said that this year's first four episodes won't be a major disappointment to "Sopranos" followers. But it should also be noted that the series does seem to be coasting a bit, albeit while adding texture to its main characters as it travels along.

Two new characters appear Sunday, both played by talented actors: Steve Buscemi, of "Fargo" and "Ghost World," gets sprung from the joint as does Robert Loggia's character. But surprisingly, Buscemi isn't the new bad guy who'll replace the beheaded Ralphie (Joe Pantoliano). That would be Loggia.

Tony Soprano (the superb James Gandolfini) and Carmella, played by Edie Falco (also magnificent) have split up. Tony is becoming uncharacteristically introspective this season, taking a closer look at the lowlifes who surround him after prodding by his shrink, Dr. Melfi (Lorraine Bracco). There are some fine moments, but the series also seems to drag a bit overall.

There are few "whackings" in the early part of this season; the confrontations are mostly verbal, and nasty.

These days, I view this critically acclaimed series a bit like a fine wine — something to be savored and appreciated by knowing how much better it is than just about anything else on the market. "The Sopranos" may not rock your world with new plot developments. Rather, the series has created its own little world, full of hard edges and unpleasant and unsavory people — and moments of tenderness and lucidity. The discriminating viewer can provide his or her own metaphors and/or historical antecedents for all the characters.

HYPOCRITICAL? Oh, just a tad: The most ridiculous display before Congress in recent weeks didn't even involve politicians: It was radio conglomerate Clear Channel's president John Hogan supposedly expressing remorse and indignation over his ousted veteran sleazeball Tampa morning man and also dropping Howard Stern from the handful of Clear Channel stations that carry him. (Over 90 percent of Stern's affiliates are on Infinity/CBS stations).

Since we are told that the conglomerate is "cleaning up its act," largely because of the Janet Jackson boob-tube fiasco, then may we assume that the company's "Wild 94.9" "Dog House" morning team in San Francisco will also be shown the door?

These two sleazeballs have been guilty of indecency and pandering for years — e.g., their "lose-your-virginity" contest a while back. At least Stern, for all his juvenile stunts, displays flashes of intelligence on his show, unlike these mean-spirited hacks.

I wouldn't be thrilled about my teen listening to Stern, but listening to "The Dog House" is worse. Stern may squander his talent, but at least he HAS some.

How many remember it was Stern who was largely responsible for Mel Karmazin eventually becoming chairman of CBS/Viacom? Despite hundreds of thousands of dollars in FCC indecency fines levied against Stern in the '80s, when Infinity boss Karmazin printed up millions of new shares of Infinity stock, the public snapped it up. And it was his Infinity stock that gave Karmazin the leverage to take over the former Tiffany network after CBS merged with Infinity.

BEST LINE OF THE MONTH: "The Daily Show's" resident angry man, funny weekly essayist Lewis Black, showed clips of the all-too-ubiquitous Whoopi Goldberg's new children's show, then sputtered: "My God. Is there anything this woman CAN do?"

Reach Bill Mann at News-mann@sonic.net



TWO OF ROMARE BEARDEN'S works, "Berkeley — the City and Its People," above — now on view for the first time outside the Berkeley City Council chambers — and "Captivity and Resistance," can be seen at SFMOMA.

Cultural realities frame vibrant art

By Robert Taylor
STAFF WRITER

IT WAS a weighty concept that Don Adams handed me in a couple of books published by the Rockefeller Foundation, but since he wrote them, I couldn't refuse.

Adams is the new director of the Richmond Art Center, and it's that concept of cultural democracy that lies at the heart of his plans for Richmond. It's also the center of the two books, "Creative Community" and "Community Culture and Globalization," which he wrote with his wife, Arlene Goldberg.

Most journalists greet foundation reports with the same wary eye they give city budget packages and employment statistics. Fortunately, only one of these Rockefeller books requires a glossary to explain such terms as "critical pedagogy" and "conscientization."

But the basic premise is simple: Diverse cultures should be treated equally, especially in a multicultural environment such as the United States.

Some arts writers are wary of concepts like that, say, well. The most extreme arguments for cultural democracy, arriving in press releases, fliers and phone calls, insist that all art is equal. Artists demand that their message be heard, whatever form it takes. And, by the way, there's no such thing as "bad art."

I don't think that's what Adams is trying to say, but he and Goldberg see community cultural development as a way to express a multitude of identities, concerns and aspirations through the arts.

Last weekend I set out to dis-



COMMENTARY

cover just how diverse cultural expression could be, in two radically different exhibits that have high standards of their own.

The first stop was the big retrospective for Romare Bearden, the African-American artist whose work is filled with images of home and family, city streets and country farmhands, jazz clubs, ancient civilizations and the civil rights movement. It's on view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art through May 16.

Bearden, whose collages can look cramped and messy in small-scale reproductions, comes to life in the big, colorful works that fill several galleries. The biggest is the 10-by-16-foot "Berkeley — the City

and Its People," which is on view for the first time outside the Berkeley City Council chambers.

The collage of photographs and colored paper is filled with images including the UC Campanile, street demonstrations, musicians and a variety of ordinary-looking people. A portion was selected as the city's logo. Over all, the collage is a crazy-quilt of community culture. Isn't that Berkeley?

If Bearden's view of America seems fragmentary, there's a reason. "What I've attempted to do is to establish a world through art in which the validity of my Negro experience could live and make its own logic," he explained in the 1960s. He chose collage intentionally because it could "forge a variety of contrary

images into one unified expression."

There are plenty of community murals with the themes of repression and liberation, but Bearden set the standard with powerful simplicity in "Captivity and Resistance." The theme of this fabric collage is the rebellion on the slave ship Amistad in 1839, but Bearden links it to the future with images of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and the shadow of abolitionist John Brown.

"Community arts" brings to mind images of neighborhood centers, school murals, festivals and street fairs. But if every culture deserves to be treated equally, what about the plutocrats?

See TAYLOR, Page C11

Rockers to take stage for sick children

■ Guitars for Life show, featuring Eddie Money, the Tubes, Dave Mason, to fund progeria group

By Brian Kluepfel
CORRESPONDENT

For more than three decades as a working musician, Newport Beach-born Casey Morris has witnessed the healing power of music.

"It has the power to turn us into children again," said the drummer. Three years ago, Morris decided to use his vast connections in the music biz to establish Guitars for Life, a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness of rare childhood diseases.

Tonight's concert at the Berkeley Community Theater features a who's who of classic rockers. Eddie Money, Traffic founder Dave Mason and local legends the Tubes will take the stage in a benefit for the Progeria Project Foundation. Two children afflicted with the rare disorder will be at the show.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Guitars for Life benefit for the Progeria Project Foundation, with Eddie Money, the Tubes and Dave Mason

WHEN: Saturday, March 5, 7 p.m.

WHERE: Berkeley Community Theater, 1930 Allston Way Berkeley

TICKETS: \$65 main floor

INFORMATION: 510-644-8957

Learn more about Guitars for Life at www.guitarsforlife.org, and get more information about progeria at www.progeriaproject.com.

The word Progeria stems from the Greek meaning "prematurely old." Those who have Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome are characterized by an appearance of accelerated aging. The children suffer from chronic arthritis, have no hair, and rarely grow taller than 3 feet. The two children who will be at the Berkeley concert are Ashley Hegi of Canada and John Tacket of Bay City, Michigan. Tacket, 15, is the oldest living Progeria survivor, which usually results in

death by age 13 because of heart failure.

Morris notes that there's new hope for families of children with Progeria, because in recent years scientists have been able to isolate the single displaced DNA molecule which causes it. The disease has puzzled scientists since it was discovered in 1886, but now there's a possibility of creating medications to battle it and of gaining insight into the aging process itself.

Morris has held 18 concerts around the world for Guitars for Life, and admits that it's been a tough row to hoe — he's using personal funds from a day business (landscaping) to plant the seeds for the fledgling nonprofit organization. Not all of the concerts have been successful, but he keeps drumming up support, enlisting the services of guitar legends like Les Paul and George Winston. (Though primarily a drummer, Morris also plays the guitar.)

"Hopefully, if people really come out and support this, it will pave the way for Guitars for Life to pay for itself," said Morris.

Though Morris would nor-

mally be itching to get on-stage himself, he'll leave those duties to Money, Mason and other players like former Night Ranger axeman Brad Gillis.

All the guitarists will be ably backed by the 'Alameda All-Stars,' a local contingent best known for their many years backing Gregg Allman. Morris enthused that the Tubes, known for "White Punks on Dope" and "Talk to Ya Later," will be doing a classic set "with full costume changes!"

Though currently based in Rockland County, N.Y., Morris is planning to open a Guitars for Life office here in the Bay Area, with a view to making it the world headquarters for the organization. "We need to bring public awareness to the community (about these rare diseases)," he said. He's been on KPFA and was scheduled for a television appearance with Tacket three months ago, but Tacket suffered a stroke.

Reach Berkeley freelance writer Brian Kluepfel at bkluepfel@hotmail.com.

'Glory' shows gems of Richmond

THERE'S A San Francisco town theater district Playhouse, 538 S. Stebbins, continues its first season of West Coast premieres with Gilman's "The Glory."

First, the name. Bill English, artistic director, ought to set bells ringing with the glimpse into the heart of a teenage. However, the long-mond resident known locally as "Butt's e-mail" — the actor who built your home or addition?

In fact, English involved in the theater than 40 years as actor and director and designer, pianist and composer.

Now, The Playhouse founders, English and Damilano, have a dream of not only own theater, but they'd been covering — a beautiful but 1910 Greek revival the An Family of Restaurant fame.

Then there's daughter Lauren Needham in "The Glory." She grew up in and still calls the city.

John Behrens, a young Richmonder in the entertainment field, has the play's set design, choreographs photos on a rear projector, and place to this Gothic tale of incest.

Six performances 8 tonight and Saturday next week at 8 p.m. day, March 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Call 415-677-9596 or www.sfpayhouse.com.

LUCKY DOG OUT: Only one per-

mains for Lucky Dog presentation of its "Strut Improvisation" tomorrow at the Studios, 2525 8th St.

The veteran in this ensemble arrived their way through a rehearsal of audience-rehearsed tales from surprisingly pointedly political.

Tickets are \$12 if you're under 18 — 4115, or go to www.joyacore.com.

AND 'APE' BOB: other studio at the same night, Jordan's theater, Acme Players (he identifies himself as monkey of APE) staged reading of "The Universal Robots (R) Touristic Classic. (8 p.m., show starts at scale \$5-\$25, include Call 510-332-1331.)

BLUES IN THE: You have a little consider this singing p.m. March 13 at College's Knox College Performing Arts Drive and Castro campus entrance.

"The Wedding" is a one-night-only game of "The smi's o e-won force as a wedding Jersey in the 1970s."

A mature audience is a collaborative program by CCC and College. It's a celebrate marriage and syrupy musical set.

Tickets are \$10 for seniors and here's the kicker:

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As a consolation the devil-may-care simply bring a three twofor for 10 bucks. Call the box office 7800, Ext. 4234.

Reach Jack Times at cctimes.com

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Friday, March 5, 2004

Section D

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WEB, Page D2



MOTOR MATTERS

CHEVY SILVERADO offers numerous sizes, shapes, seats and engines to fit most any hauling or towing job, plus it comes with the choice of an automatic or manual transmission and either two-, four- or all-wheel drive.

Buying a Chevy Silverado requires a lot of thought

MOTOR MATTERS

Buying a Chevy Silverado is not a simple task.

With the numerous sizes, shapes, seats and engines available you must analyze your needs before going to the dealer.

For example, the new 1500 series offers the choice of two/three passenger regular cab or five/six passenger extended cab. Then you have to consider if you need a short box or a long box.

The short measures 6.5 feet, the long is 8 feet. The box is designed to carry one load on the bed of the

box and another elevated above it. You can even get one with a dump body, so you have to contemplate the purpose for the pickup.

Then you must decide what you might want to haul, the weight of what you're hauling or towing, and how many people you'll transport.

The 1500 series might not do the job; you might need to step up into the 2500, 2500 Heavy Duty series, or even the 3500 models.

There's a Silverado for just about every purpose, and an engine to haul any load. In the 2500HD/3500 Series, the 3/4-ton models have a

TOM KEANE
Keane on Wheels

GVWR of 9,200 and can haul 3,964 pounds.

Not enough? The one-ton models have a GVWR of 11,400 pounds and a payload of 5,753 pounds.

Other HD models can go as high as a 6,089-pound payload.

There are three choices in V8 engines — the Vortec 8100 8.1-liter V8, the Duramax Turbo Diesel 6800

6.6-liter V8, and a Vortec 6000 6.0-liter V8 — and one V6. These engines range from 195 to 345 horsepower.

Other considerations are the transmission — manual or automatic — and either two-, four- or all-wheel drive.

The fact is that even though the Silverado is a workhorse, it has many features that provide comfort to the driver, such as the instrument panel that displays various information about the truck's systems and how they are functioning.

Silverado is available with ABS

disc brakes, a PASSlock theft deterrent system, and is loaded with interior comforts, especially on the extended cab models.

These models have dual-zone temperature controls, steering wheel mounted controls and six-way power on the driver's seat.

My tester is the SS model, which stands for Super Sport. It features a dynamite engine plus a leather interior comparable to a high-powered luxury sedan.

See KEANE, Page D2

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<p>2003 BMW 3 Series 323i</p>			

1935 Austin Sedan: Cozy but not speedy

MOTOR MATTERS

Melvin Gamble has spent his adult life being diplomatic for the State Department at various posts around the world. From 1999 until 2002 he was assigned to Pretoria, South Africa.

A few months after their arrival, he told his wife, Janelle, that he was going to an auction in search of some paintings to help decorate their home.

He failed to find any art work for their home but, before he left the auction, out rolled a cute little 11.5-foot-long green car with black fenders and 54-spoke wire wheels that caught his eye.

The diminutive car had an "A" on each hubcap and a pair of 7-inch "King of the Road" headlights flanking the radiator. Gamble lingered at the auction to witness the fate of the car that had caught his attention.

Diplomatically speaking, Gamble says, "Your wife is never with you when you buy a car." He was the successful bidder on that August day in 2000. He believes that he is the fourth owner.

Gamble went home to explain to his wife how the art work he had purchased wasn't exactly for the house. Actually, it was more suitable for the garage.

For the next two years the Gambles were a familiar sight in Pretoria as they drove about the city in

VERN PARKER
Classic Classics

their 5.25-foot-tall Austin with its 93-inch wheelbase and its 4.50x18-inch tires.

Lighted semaphore arms that spring from the sides of the car signal impending turns to other drivers. A lever at the hub of the three-spoke steering wheel activates the signals.

As those in government service know, each assignment must end. As Gamble's South Africa tour of duty came to a conclusion in August 2002, the Austin was placed in a shipping container, trucked off to Durbin and put on a ship bound for the Port of Baltimore.

The Gamble family flew back to the United States and settled in Reston, Va. He was at work when the car was delivered to his house.

As a red MG was rolled off the truck, Gamble's wife informed the delivery men, "My husband has a green car." Oops! They reloaded their mistake onto the truck and two days later returned with the 1935 Austin Sedan.

"It was in good shape," Gamble recalls. However, the four-cylinder engine was seized. Even trying the hand crank proved fruitless in freeing the engine.

A visit to a British car specialist



DIPLOMAT is fourth owner of this tiny 1935 Austin Sedan convertible with a 93-inch wheelbase and right-hand drive

resulted in the engine turning freely. Gamble was pleased to once again step up on the running board and climb behind the right-hand-drive car with its four-speed manual-transmission lever at his left hand.

Visibility to the rear is only through a 5x19-inch rear window. Landau bars on each quarter panel stand ready to hinge the top down.

At the front of the car, the one-piece windshield can be pushed out at the bottom for ventilation. The

two wipers suspended from the top share a single electric motor.

A side vent on each side, forward of the door, draws cooling air into the cockpit. Conversely, three similar vents on each side of the engine hood release heat from the engine compartment.

The interior is green leather from the front bucket seats to the storage pockets in the doors. The half of the dashboard in front of the passenger is entirely for storage while

the half before the driver holds all the instrumentation, including the 80-mile-per-hour speedometer.

"It'll go 50 mph," Gamble says, "and that's pushing it." Four-wheel brakes are ready to halt the rolling mass.

The trunk lid is hinged at the bottom, allowing the lid to be lowered to form a platform on which luggage can be secured. The actual trunk space is occupied by a vertically stored spare tire against the

back of the rear seat.

Driving about with daughters in the Austin is an extraordinary experience, a gossamer and a delight. "It's rather cozy,"

For your car to be the subject of the Classic Car Club, send a photo (front and side) and brief details and photos to Vern Parker, 2221 Atlantic Avenue, Vienna, VA 22181. Good quality will be

Minivans update cargo floors, tailgate seats, AWD

MOTOR MATTERS

Minivans have been on America's roads for 20 years. Chrysler gets the credit for popularizing the minivan formula that hastened the demise of the station wagon.

I don't know who gets the blame for linking minivans and soccer moms, and somehow making it shameful to be either. But shame on them for maligning such a flexible and sensible family hauler. In the last few years, the minivan has evolved, and continues to do so.

Honda shook things up with its redesigned 1999 Odyssey by introducing a "disappearing" or "magic" third row, which sinks into a well to create a flat floor, or flips backward to create a seat for tailgating at those soccer games. Since then, others have been trying to catch up.

Last year, when Toyota brought out its larger, redesigned 2004 Sienna minivan, it debuted with a disappearing third-row, too. Either side of the 60/40 split bench seat can be stowed separately with one hand, and it is wonderfully easy to operate.

Ford's new Freestar, which is a redesigned Windstar, is playing catch-up with the market with its split third-row seat that folds into a well in the floor. The beauty of such wells, found on all minivans in which the seat folds

CHERYL JENSEN
Down the Road

into the floor, is the increased cargo room available when the seat is not folded into it.

Nissan's 2004 Quest went one just a bit better than everyone else with its Fold-Away second and third row seats so that owners do not have to remove either row when more cargo space is needed. The second row seats fold down and drop forward to the floor. The third row easily folds and rotates into a storage well in the floor behind it.

2005 Chrysler and Dodge minivans, which go on sale in the spring, are finally getting with the program by offering Stow 'n Go seats that can be stowed in three steps in about 30 seconds with just one hand, according to the company. The second-row bucket seats fold into the floor, as does the third-row split 60/40 bench seat.

The entire bench, or either side, may be stowed individually. And the bench may be flipped, like that in the Odyssey, for rearward tailgate seating.

Stow 'n Go will be standard on the company's uplevel long-wheelbase

Chrysler and Dodge minivans. Years ago — when Honda first introduced it — some Chrysler executives dined such a feature.

The irony here is that the new flexibility offered by the Stow 'n Go seats means that Chrysler minivans will no longer offer an all-wheel-drive option. Chrysler is using the mechanical space for its new fold-flat second and third-row seats instead.

The automaker hopes to steer consumers who want an all-wheel-drive minivan to the new six-seat, three-row Pacifica. Besides, only 3 percent of the minivans Chrysler sold were equipped with all-wheel drive.

But while consumers are losing some all-wheel-drive choices, they will gain others. Toyota offers all-wheel drive on its Sienna, and General Motors will offer all-wheel-drive on its new "crossover sport vans."

The demise of the minivan has been predicted often, and General Motors is actually phasing out its minivans — but in name only. It will replace them with what it is calling "crossover sport vans." These new vans are based on the same mechanical underpinnings as the old minivans with some modifications.

However, crossover sport vans have the styling of a sport utility vehicle for those who can't bear to be

thought of as the minivan soccer moms I mentioned earlier.

The Chevrolet Venture, Pontiac Montana and Oldsmobile Silhouette minivans will be sold through 2004 and produced into mid-September. At that time GM will switch to producing the new 2005-models.

The Venture comes back as the Uplander. The Montana reappears as the Montana SV6. Oldsmobile is being discontinued. Saturn and Buick get their first minivans — the Buick Terraza and the Saturn Relay.

General Motors seems to have had somewhat better success with all-wheel-drive minivan sales than Chrysler. Around 7 or 8 percent of Chevrolet Ventures that are sold have all-wheel drive, according to Chevrolet, and the Pontiac Montana has been running almost double that.

In addition to optional Versatrak all-wheel drive, these seven-passenger vans offer a third-row bench seat that is split 50/50 and folds flat to create a level load floor.

In any case, for those who have the self-confidence necessary to drive a minivan these days, or for those who want a minivan in disguise, the good news is that there are plenty of choices. And like the rest of the industry, everything keeps getting better.

Keane

FROM PAGE D1

And it isn't difficult to climb aboard, unlike some trucks that require a high step to get into the cab.

The sound system is top-of-the-line with six speakers on the extended cab models. The interior sound level on the test-truck is very hush-hush.

The amenities and conveniences of the \$41,665 model were surprising, and most are standard equipment. The only options were OnStar, XM Satellite radio, trailering equipment and an upscale Bose radio.

And the price won't scare you off: Silverado trucks start at about \$20,000. The point is that you can get a pickup to fill your exact needs. You can even get

one with Quadraflex four-wheel steering for making tight, trailering

But first, you have what you want, and the dealer

By my count, the configurations to choose from without counting the seven different trims, and the 20-inch wheel SS model

That's where a Silverado will come in handy, the various choices

If you are a Silverado chaser, you want to take your time. He can select different colors and the fabrics for seat covers, consisting of vinyl, cloth, keeping him busy while you discuss the various functions with the sales

CHEVY SILVERADO SS

Vehicle Type	Five-six-passenger 4WD extended cab
Suggested Retail Price as Tested	
Engine Type	6.0-liter Vortec 6000 V8 high-output
Horsepower	345 @ 5,600 rpm
Torque	380 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm
Transmission	Four-speed automatic
Height	65.4 in.
Curb Weight	4,950 lb.
Mileage	24 city/31 hwy

Tips for repairing a balky driver's side door

KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

Q The driver's side door of my car has become increasingly difficult to close.

Unless I push on it while closing or slam it, it usually bounces back to the second catch.

How big a deal will this be to repair? Is there an easy solution?

Tina Collins, Redmond, Wash.

A Tina, you're not alone. Both doors on my truck have been behaving similarly and I've been derelict in making time to fix them.

Let's check a few things and get a better idea of what you (and I) might be up against.

Start by inspecting the door-body weather strip for damage and the sealing perimeter for foreign objects.

A folded-back weather strip or damaged wiring conduit could make the door difficult to close.

Next, check the latch and striker for damage or looseness.

The latch is contained within the rear edge of

the door and the striker is the protruding knob affixed to the door pillar. It's possible either of these two parts has worked loose and their retaining screws require tightening.

In most cases the striker utilizes elongated mounting holes, allowing for adjustment. If it has worked loose, try to align it by matching the paint or plating "crush" from its original position as you tighten the fasteners.

Were these parts OK or have you fixed them? Crouching down, eyeball the door-body intersection at a horizontal body crease or stripe.

Next, open the door an inch or so and observe any changes in alignment. It's very possible the door is sagging downward because of worn hinges or body fatigue.

Another way to verify this is to continuously apply (lift or press) the outside door handle as you gently close the door fully and open it.

If the door drags on the striker, this can make it difficult to close. If the door opens and closes freely, a faulty latch might be the cause of your

closing difficulty.

A sagging door will probably require professional treatment. Hinge adjustment can be tricky or impossible because of a welded-on attachment.

A competent technician (body or general repair) should be able to make quick work of this, assuming the vehicle is free of body or door damage.

If you're unable to pursue this option, adjusting the striker slightly down or outward might provide temporary relief. The door failing to remain securely latched while closed would be a serious safety concern, and it should be corrected immediately.

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose. Write to him in care of Drive, Mercury News, 750 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, CA 95190; or e-mail to under-the-hood@juno.com. He cannot make personal replies.

Web

FROM PAGE D1

mobile research sites and fill out some simple search fields, including make/model, city/market and price.

A list of search results with your specifications will appear. Click on each vehicle's listing to see its actual invoice price, photos and any additional features.

Some sites may even suggest alternative vehicles.

If you're not satisfied, check the manufacturers' official Web sites and browse the cars' features and pricing packages.

"Each Web site will tell you something a little different," said Karen Coffey, executive vice president and chief counsel at the Texas Automobile Dealers Association in Austin.

"Shop around. The more educated the buyer, the better the buyer."

Contacting local dealer

Once you've located the car you want, you'll be given the option to contact a local dealer by e-mail, telephone or in person.

If there are four or five dealers that have the car you are looking for, contact each of

them, suggests Philip Reed, consumer advice editor for Edmunds.com in Santa Monica, Calif.

"They will e-mail you back because they want to sell you that car," Reed said.

At that point, it's up to the individual and the dealership to negotiate a deal.

Consumers who do their research make better customers, said Jerry Reynolds, managing partner of Prestige Ford in Garland, Texas, and owner of Prestige Lincoln Mercury and Prestige Mazda in Dallas.

A lot of times, consumers believe they are being cheated out of a fair price, he said.

"This is going to sound crazy for a dealer to say, but go online and find out what I paid for the car," Reynolds said.

"An educated consumer is a much easier sale than an uneducated consumer."

There's really no rhyme, reason or consistency when it comes to automobile pricing, Golub said.

"Pricing is relative because car dealerships want to make a profit," Golub said.

"However, car dealerships also know most people are going online and pricing cars themselves.

"Chances are you are going to get a good deal."

Reynolds said his sales teams are more than willing to work with customers over e-

mail or in person to make sure they are satisfied with the service they receive at his dealerships.

"If you find a car online that you like and I have, let us know," Reynolds said. "I will make sure it is waiting for you and ready to test drive when you get here."

More buyers using Web

About 89 percent of automotive-seeking consumers went online last year to do their research before visiting a dealership, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2003 New Auto shopper's study.

And on average, Internet users spend a total of five hours online shopping for their new vehicle, the study found.

But automobile research Web sites are not going to put Reynolds and car dealerships nationwide out of business, Coffey said.

"Dealers have embraced the Web and have tried to make their Web sites more customer-friendly," she said.

In fact, many dealerships post inventory listings and allow customers to schedule service appointments online.

"No matter what, you always are going to want to test drive and see how you feel in the car," Coffey said. "And there are always those who will want to kick the tires."

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Buell's Firebolt XB12R cycle: 'American sport innovation'

MOTOR MATTERS

Much like buying a new car, there are a myriad of choices in selecting the motorcycle that's right for you, making it a genuine chore. Your performance requirements, the type of riding that you intend to do, and personal styling preferences, all play a significant role in making the ideal selection.

Ride quality and affordability are other factors to consider, not to mention your physical size and age, which are also important issues.

I rode last year's Buell Lightning XB9S and came away with a favorable impression. For this review, I tried on the Firebolt XB12R for size. Buell models start with a fun-to-ride, easy-to-own Buell Blast, followed by two versions of the Buell Firebolt (XB9R and XB12R), and wrapped up by three Buell Lightning versions (XB9S and XB12S).

The XB9S features two configurations — short and shorter. In essence, there is a standard model and a lower model (seat height is 28.6 inches compared to the standard 30.1 inches) for vertically challenged riders.

Though there's no official reference for the "S" and "R" designations, it seems appropriate to think of the "S" as "Street-Savvy" and the "R" as "Road-Racer."

The primary difference between S and R models is the riding position — S versions feature a more upright position with raised handgrips, lower footpegs and a flyscreen.

The R models invite a laydown position sporting lower, raked cafe-style bars and higher pegs with a larger fairing. R models are more conducive to racing and aggressive road riding.

XB9 models for both the Firebolt and Lightning are powered by a 994 cc air-cooled four stroke, 45-degree isolation mounted V-Twin Cam motor, with the exhaust split through full-length duals.

The 92 horsepower, electronic

ARV VOSS
2-Wheeling Today

cally fuel-injected motor puts out 70 pounds-foot of torque over a broad, pleasing range, and is mated to a five-speed constant mesh manual transmission.

XB12 bikes draw their motive power from a stroked version of the same motor yielding 1203 cc's and generating 103 horses and 84 pounds-foot of torque. Triple digit speeds come up quickly and effortlessly.

My test Buell Firebolt XB was the 12R. Up front were Showa inverted forks with adjustable compression damping, rebound damping and spring preload. Out back are Showa shock absorbers, also with adjustable compression damping, rebound damping and spring preload.

Wheels were six-spoke cast alloy, 17-inches finished in Translucent Amber, with a Dunlop D207 FY 120/70 ZR17 front tire and a fat D207 U 180/55 ZR17 bringing up the rear. The rear wheel features solid spokes while the front wheel actually consists of 12 spokes in a double-six design.

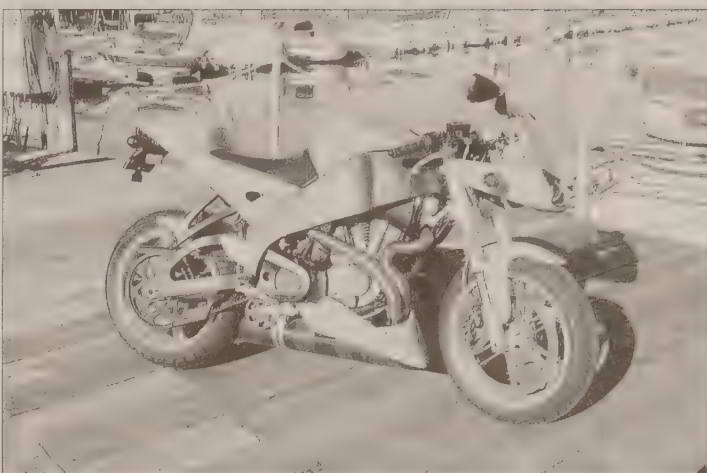
Bringing the Firebolt to a halt is a piece of cake with a ZTL type stainless floating rotor and six-piston caliper up front and single disc aft.

My Firebolt XB12R test bike was finished in Racing Red with silver and black accents. The suggested price was set at \$10,995 while California models run \$12,824.46 out the door.

Summary

Initially, one would think that the Buell sport bike lineup isn't for everyone — particularly not for cruiser types like myself.

When first swinging a leg over, I must admit I felt akin to a 500-pound mature Silverback Gorilla on



MOTOR MATTERS

BUELL FIREBOLT XB12R has a wheelbase best suited for riders 6 feet tall or shorter.

a little kid's motorized mini-scooter, which later evolved into a more comfortable Chimpanzee on a surfboard.

The Buell is well balanced, responding rapidly and easily to steering input. It's almost as if the bike goes where you think, before you actually initiate a physical directional move.

The sculpted solo seat is comfortable enough for the right sized rider, and there is a passenger pillion stowed beneath a locking panel for occasions when you want to go two up — just don't forget to adjust the suspension to compensate for the added weight.

The bars are relatively narrow but angle down and back enough for a secure controlled feeling.

As indicated, at 6 feet, 4 inches, I'm a little too tall in the saddle, elevating the center of gravity.

Even so, the front wheel of this short wheelbase, Italian-framed ride is virtually invisible, blocked from view by the fairing (unless you scoot forward, which actually seems to be more comfortable) positioned just ahead of the instrument panel housing speedo, tach and indicator lights.

Controls and switches are ideally positioned for user-friendly operation without taking one's eyes off the road.

The only negative for me, was my long legs. Positioning myself forward set up for the best shifting and braking accessibility, but that necessitated holding my head up when laying over the tank (airbox), resulting in sore rear neck muscles.

The riding rush was enough to offset that, though, and it shouldn't be an issue for riders 6 feet or shorter.

Gear changes are smooth and seamless, with the shifter within easy reach without leaving the peg. The same holds true for the rear brake lever.

Fuel storage is integrated into the frame, like Chrysler's Tomahawk concept, with what appears to be a conventional tank actually being an airbox. Capacity is 3.7 gallons with a low fuel warning feature — a dual odometer assists in calculating range.

Fuel economy should allow doing in excess of 100 miles before tapping the reserve supply, even with heavy throttle application.

The Buell Firebolt XB12R is an admirable example of a serious sport bike that is exceptionally suited to great solo riding and capable of transporting a passenger if you must.

Bottom line, the XB12R offers in-

novative styling and function. The price is, for some, but this should be considered to inspire show "pearly whites"

SPECIFICATIONS

FIREBOLT XB12R

Suggested Price: \$10,995

Price as Tested: \$12,824.46

(with California tax)

Engine Type: 1203 cc, 45-degree

isolation mounted V-Twin Cam

draft (DDFI) fuel injection

breathing 2 into 1 air

haust.

Horsepower: 103 @ 6,000 rpm

Torque: 84 (pounds)

6,000 rpm

Transmission: Five

stant mesh manual

Drive Train: Five

Triplex chain / final

drive path, 14 mm

reinforced Hibox belt

Plus technology

Suspension: Front

inverted fork with

adjustable compression

ing and rebound

Showa shock absorbers

adjustable compression

bumping damping and

load.

Brakes: Front —

Load (ZTL) type with

less steel floating

and 6 piston caliper

mm stainless steel

piston caliper

Tires: Dunlop D207

ZR17 front / D207 R

rear, mounted on

loy Translucent Amber

Wheelbase: 52

Length Overall: 70

Rake: 21 degrees

Trail: 3.3 inches

Curb Weight: 375

Fuel Capacity: 3.7

EPA Mileage: 47

City/65 highway

Seat height: 30.1

Buick, Mercury aim for seniors with new models

MOTOR MATTERS

Two vehicle brands with the oldest buyers in America are attempting revivals: General Motors' Buick and Ford's Mercury divisions. Intended for buyers approaching their 60s, these new models have been unveiled at the recent auto shows.

Many analysts had predicted in recent years that these two brands would go the way of Oldsmobile — into extinction. However, GM has announced \$3 billion of investment into new Buicks.

Much of that investment will go into truck-type vehicles. Buick had struggled in the past selling only sedans in a market favoring minivans, sport utilities and trucks.

Buick finally got its first truck-type vehicle a few years ago. The Rendezvous, with an available third-row seat, shares its basic architecture with GM's minivans (Chevrolet Venture, Pontiac Montana), as well as the quirky Pontiac Aztek.

The Rendezvous, Buick says, has been successful in luring in new, younger, customers. In the fall, Buick went to market with the Rainier, a true sport utility based on the Chevrolet TrailBlazer.

GM gave Buick some exclusivity with the Rainier by making it the only SUV among those offered by Chevrolet, GMC, Oldsmobile —

MICHELLE KREBS
She's Freewheeling

even Saab will eventually get a version — to have a short wheelbase with a V8 engine.

Now, Buick comes back to the market with a new sedan, the 2005 LaCrosse, due out in the fall and unveiled at the Chicago auto show.

"The LaCrosse is the first volley in a product renaissance that will sweep very quickly through the entire Buick portfolio," said Gary L. Cowger, president of GM North America, at its unveiling.

Buick's renaissance relies on powerful engines, stylish exteriors, quieter and well-crafted interiors, along with better ride and handling.

"There's a lot at stake here, so LaCrosse needs to make a strong statement about where we're taking Buick as a brand — namely, more upscale and into an area of quality and premium execution not currently being delivered in this segment," he added.

The LaCrosse targets the 49- to 59-year-old buyer, Cowger said. Using the same basic structure as the current Buick Regal and the Pontiac Grand Prix, the LaCrosse replaces the Regal, as well as the



MOTOR MATTERS

Century. Buick opted to re-name the sedan since it will cover a wider slice of the market.

The LaCrosse is the name of a Buick crossover concept shown in 2000. The Century name has been used on and off since 1926; Regal has existed continuously since 1973.

The LaCrosse, available with five- or six-passenger seating, competes with a wide range of midsize cars, from Hyundai Sonata to the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord to the Mercury Sable and Toyota Avalon.

Ironically, the buzz at the Chicago auto show was about how

much the LaCrosse looks like its competitor, the Sable. Despite the name change, GM is fooling no one: the LaCrosse is a Regal.

Across the exhibit hall, Mercury showed the Montego sedan and announced it would build a crossover vehicle — a car-based minivan-sport utility combo.

"Lincoln-Mercury is in the midst of a renaissance. We will introduce 11 new models representing six new segments over the next four years. In fact, the entire showroom will be new by 2007," declared Daryl Hazel, president of Lincoln-Mercury Division.

Of the 11 new models, six will

be Mercurys, Hazel said. Among them will be the Montego, on sale this fall and unveiled in Chicago.

Mercury's first new sedan in almost 20 years shares its same basic architecture with the Ford Five Hundred.

The Montego will be offered in front- and all-wheel drive. Two engines will be available: a 2.3-liter four-cylinder or a 3-liter V6.

Transmissions include a four-speed automatic, an innovative continuously variable transmission that shifts — not at fixed points, but when optimum for smoothness and fuel economy, — or a six-speed au-

tomatic, unique to the

Up to six air bags

on the Montego

Safety Canopy, which

the roof and covers the

of the car in a side

Mercury's upcoming

will be based on the

on sale this fall. Also

another midsize sedan

the Mazda6 and the

Futura.

I wonder, however,

engineering" will really

Every one of the new

hicles is merely a

Mercury badge and

This mightiest Mini Cooper is 200 ponies strong

BY TONY SWAN
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

If you're one of those, like me, who subscribe to the idea that more horsepower is invariably better, you're probably familiar with that notion's invariable asterisk: depending on what it costs.

Meet the Mini Cooper S John Cooper Works package, a pretty big name for such a small car.

But it delivers a pretty big punch for its size, and it doesn't seem to have much downside until you check the bottom line, which will undoubtedly provoke a pause for reflecting on your priorities.

Background: It's no secret that the little Mini was one of the big success stories of the year.

BMW's modern update on the 1959 original captured about 20,000 buyers in the first half of the 2003 model year and also captured the North American Car of the Year Award.

But stagnation is the enemy in the car business. With a one-car lineup, the Mini product planners know variations are critical to keeping their offering fresh in the public eye.

That's where John Michael Cooper (he goes by Mike) comes in.

Mike Cooper is the son of British motorsports legend John, the man who created the first Mini Cooper and the Cooper S in the early '60s.

Along with his father, Mike Cooper was also involved in BMW's development of the latter-day Mini Cooper

and Cooper S, and when BMW decided it needed yet another performance upgrade for its new Mini, the John Cooper Works got the job again.

This is pragmatic marketing. The Cooper name is strongly linked to the Mini, and BMW was eager to maintain ties with the car's British roots.

But even with John Cooper gone — he died in 2001 — the shops in East Preston, Sussex, Britain, made as much engineering sense as any other possible source of horsepower.

John Cooper Works has been a solidly established source of extra speed for Minis ever since British Motors Corp. discontinued the Cooper and Cooper S in 1971 and continues to heat up original Minis to this day.

Mining more horsepower from the supercharged Cooper S was right up this company's alley.

But before we get into the mining details, I'll bet you'd like to know how much more horsepower.

So here you go: the John Cooper Works version spins up 200 horsepower and 177 pound-feet of torque.

Compare that to 163 horsepower and 155 pound-feet of the standard Cooper S. Pretty solid increase, no question, and pretty impressive for a little 1.6-liter, four-cylinder engine.

The engineering entailed in achieving this 23 percent horsepower increase is straightforward. The JCW team did a lot of machine work on the cylinder head to improve its breathing, increased supercharger boost from 11.6 pounds per square

inch to 14.0, installed a revised engine control program and improved exhaust flow.

BMW and JCW engineers are convinced the clutch and six-speed manual gearbox that come with the standard Cooper S are capable of handling the extra output.

Similarly, there are no changes to the suspension or brakes. What you get for your money is more engine. Which raises an obvious question: How much money?

The answer: \$5,000, which works out to about \$135 for each additional pony.

If you slice it in terms of 0-to-60, the unit cost seems even steeper. The standard Mini Cooper S can scoot to 60 mph in 7.0 seconds flat. The John Cooper Works version can do it in 6.4 seconds.

Thus you're paying \$833 for each tenth gained in the 60 mph sprint.

Reduced to simple — make that simplistic — arithmetic, that looks like a pretty formidable price premium.

But it doesn't take into account the distinct edge in everyday driving response that goes with this package, in particular its midrange punch.

The JCW Mini Cooper S is much quicker in rolling situations where the driver wants as much power as he can bring to bear on a tight lane-change, for example, or minimizing passing exposure time on a two-lane highway.

And for those who think more is always better, it increases the Mini's

fun-to-drive index by a

der of magnitude.

Back to the bottom line: A particular example of the JCW Works package was the Cooper S that was essentially a

tional equipment, which

as-tested price a not-so-

sounding \$24,975, including

destination charge.

But if you start checking

some of the Mini's man-

tions — power moon-

ple, or leather upholstery,

grades or sport seats,

wouldn't take long to see

Mini Cooper S with a

cess of \$28,000.

And for that kind of

could start looking at

the Nissan 350Z and

the other Mini models.

I should also

are aftermarket

go-faster packages

claim more power at

go with the more

deal?

The one-word answer

A dealer-installed

Cooper Works package

by the same 48-month

warranty as the other

Here's my take: I

in a Mini Cooper S

and I wanted the extra

I'd go with the standard

far from devoid of

the JCW package.

In a Mini minute.

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What are you driving?

Auto Plus

Friday, August 24, 2001

Section D

Advertising supplement to The Montclair, The Piedmont, The Berkeley Voice, The Journal, The Alameda Journal

Classic Classics: MGB still going strong [D3]

DAVE VAN SICKLE

Most gas-saving gadgets fall short of touted claims

When gasoline prices begin to rise, 100 million motorists concern themselves with economy. And, in consequence, a number of products are marketed by vendors advertising "gas-saving" gadgets. These products are supposed to sound like a magic wand that will reduce fuel consumption. The products are supposed to be used in conjunction with a gas-saving device. And, in fact, they do. And, in fact, they do. And, in fact, they do.

Worse yet, several devices actually increase exhaust emissions, and under federal regulations, their registration could be considered illegal.

After researching, I've found only a few that actually prove fuel economy and more that do so significantly.

In spite of summer's heat, the 2001 Acura RSX Type-S is a fun little sports car to drive and much roomier and less noisy than expected. The ride is a bit bouncy, but steering is easy.



ACURA RSX TYPE-S is a fun little sports car to drive and much roomier and less noisy than expected. The ride is a bit bouncy, but steering is easy.

Acura RSX makes shifting much more enjoyable

TOM KEANE

Twirling around town, Acura RSX is a fun little sports car to drive and much roomier and less noisy than expected. The ride is a bit bouncy, but steering is easy.

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MORTGAGE/Sales: Telemarketer & Loan Officer, Spanish & English, P/T & F/T, \$20K-\$35K. Will train, 925-520-0170 Web ID CC0304664996

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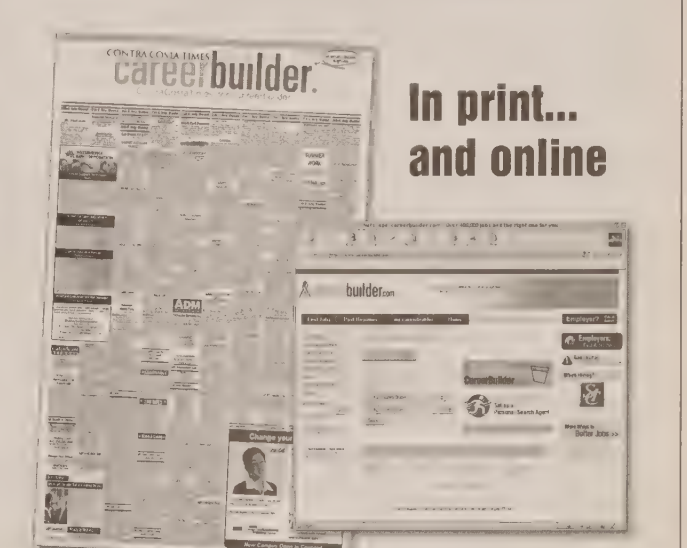
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Employment

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NURSING/RN
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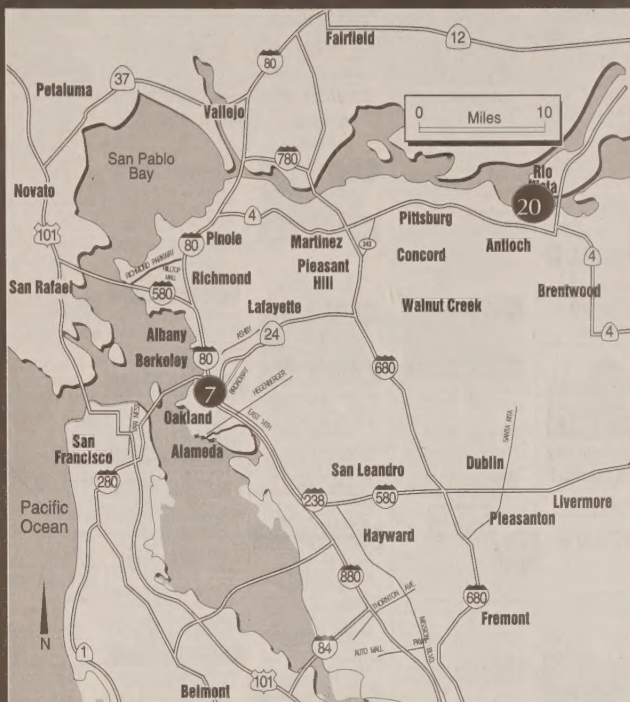
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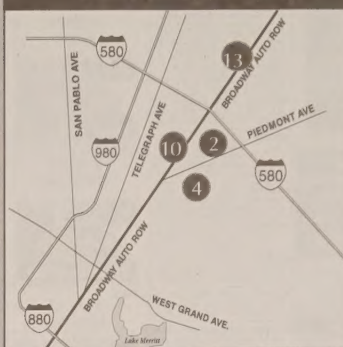


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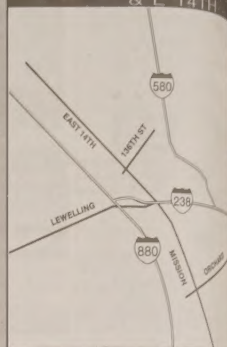
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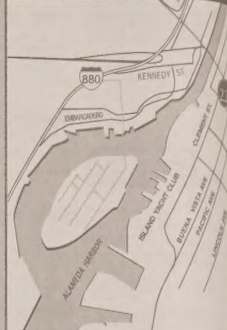
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